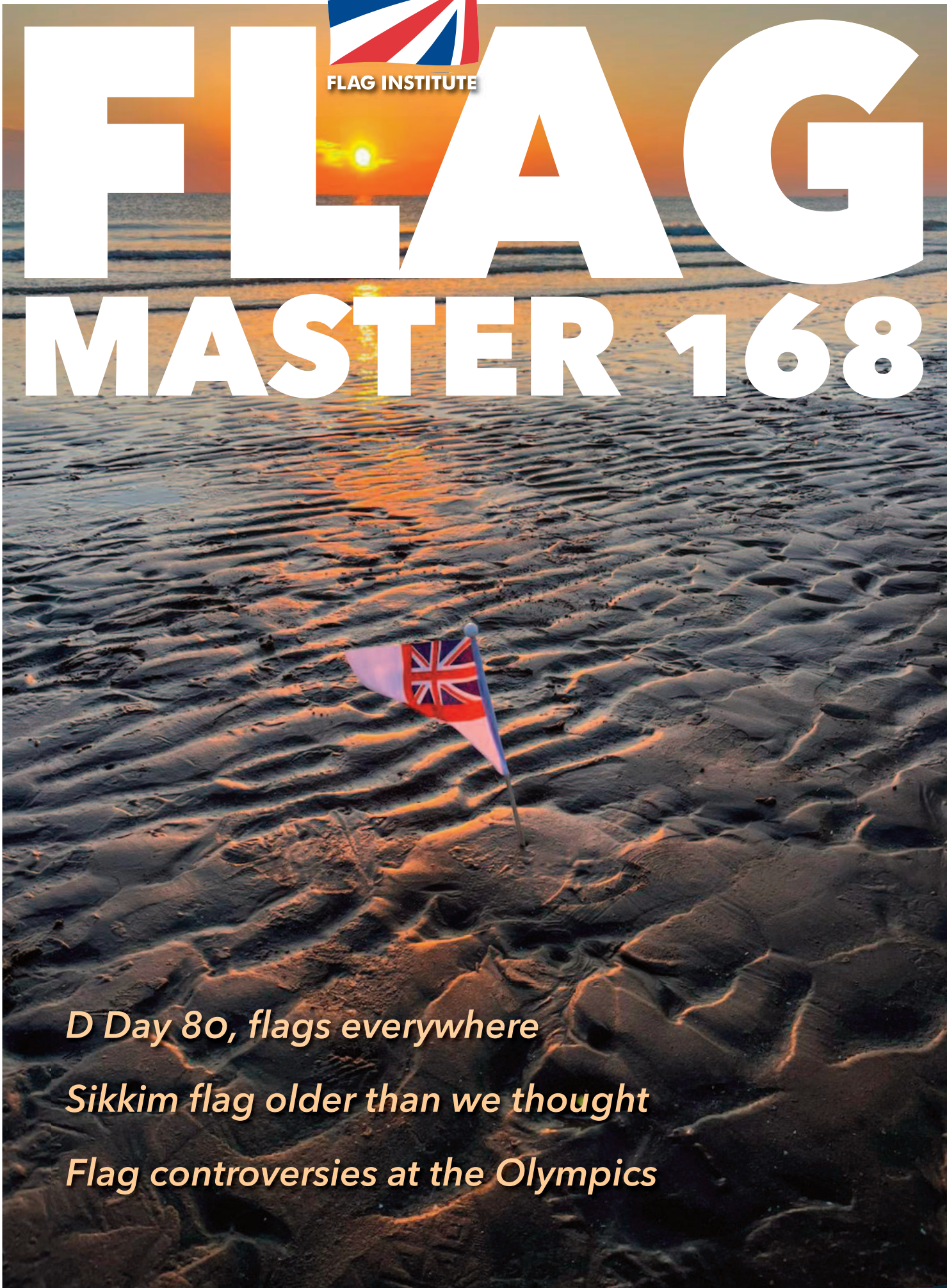
Flagmaster - Vexillological Magazine of the Flag Institute Issue 168 | Summer 2024 • Flagraffiti • Mangaia's Victoria Flag • Colour ratios • Alan Hardy • Minnesota

FLAG INSTITUTE

FLAG MASTER 168



D Day 80, flags everywhere

Sikkim flag older than we thought

Flag controversies at the Olympics

CONTRIBUTERS

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FM'S COVER

Sunrise 6 June 2024 Normandy beaches, 80 years after the Allied invasion. Photo Malcolm Farrow.

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MASTHEAD

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The Flag Institute
Founded by Dr William G. Crampton in April 1971, the Flag Institute is a UK charity (CIO 1152496) working to document, celebrate and promote flags in all their variety. Independent, inclusive and informed, the Flag Institute shares knowledge, opinion and ideas in person, in print and online. It publishes a twice-yearly a full-colour journal *Flagmaster*; organises twice-yearly international conferences at different UK venues; runs the William Crampton Library, one of the world's leading flag research and documentation centres; and offers a unique free source of advice, information and guidance.

In the absence of a UK Flag Act, the Flag Institute forms the de facto authority on flags flown in the UK, its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, serving as adviser to the UK Government and UK Parliament. It promotes the creation and adoption of new community flags and maintains the UK Flag Registry as the official record of designs.

The Flag Institute is also proudly international in scope and outlook, with members from all six continents. It is a full member of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV) and the three-time host of the biennial International Congress of Vexillology (ICV), most recently in London in 2017.

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Graphic Design - Theun Okkerse FF The Superfluous Flag

FLAG INSTITUTE

The Next Step

In my last editorial, in *Flagmaster* 167, I reflected on whether we had learnt the lessons of history in view of the appalling conflicts going on around us – mostly in faraway places of which we know little. This was brought home in a dramatic fashion by the D Day 80 commemorations in Normandy and elsewhere, just before and on 6 June this year. It was a conversation I had with several people of different nationalities during my visit to Normandy. Our collective view was that we had not learnt the lessons of history but must keep on trying to do so. What has all that to do with flags? Rather a lot I believe.

A flag is the most basic means of declaring an identity. A name does not fully do it; a national identity card certainly doesn't. The quickest means of establishing your identity is your flag. In a split nanosecond you can tell that a person holding aloft a particular flag identifies with the nation or place concerned. Even a protester at a march waving a flag not of their own nation is identifying with the flag they wave. So what, you may ask.

If a flag is such an effective means of showing who you are (or who you support or represent) it brings a responsibility to treat these symbols with the greatest respect. I saw this in action in Normandy over D Day. We all expect others we encounter to respect us; we all have our individual self-respect; therefore it behoves us to dignify the symbols which represent ourselves and others alike. I referred to four flags in particular at Christmas. Ironically, I do so again but four different ones. The Union Jack, the Maple Leaf, the Tricolour and the Stars and Stripes were the ubiquitous flags of D Day and rightly so.

Malcolm Farrow OBE FF FFI
President Flag Institute

The Olympic Games are not without flag controversies

Leigh Wetherall FF

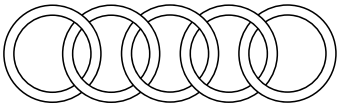
The Olympics are synonymous with flags. At each Games, Summer or Winter, flags are everywhere we look, but such ubiquity does not always guarantee accuracy. This can mean a flag's significance can sometimes be overlooked. Flags can delight and unsettle; they can celebrate and divide.

As a child, flags were the reason I watched the Olympic opening ceremony, with memories of Freddie Mercury belting out *Barcelona* against a backdrop of the Spanish flag.

The Olympic flag is arguably one of the world's most recognisable. A flag unwittingly designed by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French aristocrat who introduced not only sport to the French curriculum in the 1890s, but sport to the world. Well, almost. He said of sport, 'For every man, woman and child, it offers an opportunity for self-improvement', whilst openly opposing the participation of women in elite track and field events throughout his life. But that's another story.

In 1913, de Coubertin began including a symbol in his Olympic correspondence of five rings overlapping in a row.[1] There is no record of why this changed to a zigzag of rings. One assumes his letters were short on space and condensed the rings to the formation we are familiar with today. The Olympic Flag was first displayed during the 1920 Summer Games in Antwerp.

Condensing, or rather squeezing, seems to have been on the mind of the British Olympic Association (BOA), testing just how many colours can be included on an interpretation of the Union Flag. There was controversy when, in preparation for this summer's Paris Olympics, Team GB kit included a stylised Union Flag in an unfamiliar colour arrangement. This was not simply a copy and paste job, replacing the colours. The fimbriations were in a different position and in a different width to those of the Union Flag, while the blue segments of the flag were not the same. By creating a piece of promotional material (alternatively known as a 'money spinner') to unite the nation in the build up to a season of sporting patriotism, the BOA's stylised Team GB flag simply triggered those who wish to provoke and divide. Should the BOA create a flag to fly instead of the Union Flag, which regrettably can be seen as a symbol of the far right and of groups that mask racial hatred as patriotism? The Union Flag at events like the Olympics can make people feel nationalistic, but at the same time possibly isolating some of the people that the flag is there to represent?



Baron de Coubertin's original design comprised five uncoloured rings in a straight line which differs from the current version by adding colour and arranging them in two lines.

Chinese flags of incorrect design used when Du Ling and Yi Siling received their air rifle medals at the Rio 2016 Games.

Upside-down Estonian flag on the pole of the Barcelona velodrome raised to celebrate gold for Erika Salumäe.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics also saw its share of controversies. There were attempts by, most notably, South Korea to have Japan's Rising Sun flag banned during the tournament. For those on the right, flying the rising sun flag is part of an effort to cleanse imperial Japan's history of aggression, and by embracing the flag, signal a belief that the Japanese should take pride in their military history, atrocities included – a resurrection of honour in failed war efforts comparable to the Confederate flag in the USA.

Many South Koreans associate the Rising Sun flag with war crimes and oppression. Prior to the Tokyo Olympics the Japanese and South Korean governments were in disputes over trade restrictions, which saw protests in both countries. Tensions were high and it was no surprise the Rising Sun flag was both contested by South Korea and flown by some in Japan. The Rising Sun flag is not Japan's national flag, so the IOC had the authority to ban it from the Games, and indeed did so.

At the same Tokyo Games, if you were both a beady-eyed vexillologist and a fan of badminton, you may have spotted an outdated version of the petals on the bauhinia flower of the Hong Kong flag. The emblem worn on the t-shirts of the badminton players was that of the flag emblem passed by the National People's Congress in 1990, and not the flag incorporated into the Hong Kong Regional Flag and Regional Emblem Ordinance in 1997, when the territory was handed over to the People's Republic by the UK.

If you are the hosts of an Olympic Games and the incorrect flag is flown once at a medal ceremony, it would be hoped word would get around the flag team to prevent a second occurrence. In 2016, word did not travel fast enough, and the incorrect flag of China was raised at two medal ceremonies. It was a matter of the angle of the stars. And a spoiler alert for the flag specification on the back page, the stars should point toward the large star's central point, but instead were incorrectly aligned identically.

The first of those two ceremonies, China won silver and bronze, resulting in three displays of the incorrect flag. All flags used at each Olympics are officially approved by the National Olympic Committees; the flag printed in the Rio Games Flags Manual was correct, so the mistake was the organiser's.

For a nation that holds symbolism, significance, and pride in their own national symbol, the UK could not have got it more vexillologically wrong when hosting an Olympic football match at the London 2012 Games. As the players were readying themselves to run onto the pitch for North Korea versus Columbia, the rather large stadium screen began showing the North Korean player profiles next to, you guessed it, the South Korean flag. This prompted the women of the North Korean side to refuse to take the field. The match was delayed. With anger and decades of turmoil flashing by their eyes, North Korea won the match resoundingly. 'Today ahead of the women's football match at Hampden Park, the South Korean flag was shown

on a big screen video instead of the North Korean flag. Clearly that is a mistake,'[2] London officials said. *Clearly*. 'We will apologise to the team and the National Olympic Committee and steps will be taken to ensure this does not happen again'.2 Compellingly, no details of those steps – to ensure flags of nations still technically at war with one another are not confused – were released.

Sprinter Cathy Freeman taking 400m gold at the 2000 Sydney Games celebrates with both the Aboriginal and Australian flag on her lap on honour.

At the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, it was white side up, not the right side up. Estonia was awarded gold in the women's cycling match sprint. As the winning cyclist, Erika Salumäe clasped her medal proudly, looked up at the flags being raised to national anthem, the Estonian flag we all know as blue atop black atop white, was raised upside down. If winning the medal was not enough of an achievement, Salumäe then had to grin through gritted teeth whilst watching the flag being raised. Salumäe courteously pointed at the flag with a smile as she walked away from the podium. Salumäe had won the same event at the 1988 Seoul Games as a member of the Soviet Union team. 1992 were the first games Estonia had competed since the restoration of independence the previous year.

Arguably one of the most memorable moments in Olympic history occurred at the Sydney Games in 2000. Sprinter Cathy Freeman at her home Olympics and in front of a packed stadium of over 112,000 people, took gold in the 400 metres. Freeman is of Indigenous Aboriginal heritage and was thrust into the glare of the public spotlight with high expectations pre-Games at a time when race relations and a history of colonial violence in Australia dominated political discourse. During a lap of honour after winning 400 metres gold, Freeman carried the Aboriginal flag alongside the Australian flag. At the time, the Aboriginal flag was not recognised as an official flag by the IOC. It is simultaneously a cliché and a reality to recognise the significance of this flag juxtaposition. A woman of proud Aboriginal descent representing a home nation where at home the concept of hope was challenged during a period of political instability.

For more flag controversies, I urge you to visit the Flag Institute online archive and read *100 years of the Olympic Games*[3] and *Olympic oddities*.[4] Olympic flag controversies are not new and have been around for along as political tensions have been around. The first instances date back to the first London Olympics Games in 1908.

Flags remain powerful. Flags can cause controversy. When one wins an Olympic medal, one wishes to see your flag being raised and not upside down. It is the moment athletes train years for and remember a lifetime. Whether innocent mistake or political statement, that moment for the athlete must not be marred or defaced. Pride in a flag is not a given. Pride in a flag comes from knowledge, understanding, acceptance, experience, reflection, and forgiveness. This summer it is the athletes I am most proud of. □

Notes

1. Muijzenberg, P. H. van den (2017). *Five rings to bring them all: a presentation of the Olympic flags.* ICV27. London, 7-11 August. London: Flag Institute.
2. Murray, E (2012) 'London 2012: North Korea's game delayed amid row over South's flag', *The Guardian,* 25 July 2012. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/jul/25/london-2012-north-korea-south-flag. (Accessed 25 May 2024).
3. '100 years of the Olympic Games', *Flagmaster* 84: 1-8.
4. Olympic oddities', *Flagmaster* 113: 14.

Further reading from the *Flagmaster* archive, available at the FI website.

Flags at the Olympic Games 1972 by W.G. Crampton, FM 7: 4-6
Flag and symbols used by Taiwan, FM 28: 7; FM 29: 5
Olympic Games, FM 29: 2
Flag of united Korean team at 2000 Olympics, FM 100: 13
Flags at 2000 Olympics [Australian Aborigine, Germany, Korea], FM 102: 28
Flag protests mar Olympic ceremony, FM 127: 13
Beijing 2008 Olympics, FM 128: 13-14
Centenary of the Olympic flag by Tom Randall, FM 152: 12-13; FM 154: 12

Column Philip Tibbetts Summer 2024

Philip Tibbetts FFI FF
Communities Vexillologist, The Flag Institute
Honorary Vexillologist at the Court of the Lord Lyon

Like any good vexillologist, flags often find themselves creeping into the rest of my life. Like the Flag Institute has for the public and government, I am the go-to in my day job for any flag questions; what should be flown and how. When the office wants to do a sweepstake for a sports tournament – a rugby world cup or the football euros – they assume, quite rightly as it happens, that I'll have table flags to distribute amongst the team.

That is almost normal now, which is why it is always a pleasant surprise when something or someone from my wider world gets inexorably drawn into vexillology. At previous London conference dinners personal friends have come along, curious to discover the subject that has woven itself around my heart and life.

Of course I have even had friends come to speak at Flag Institute conferences, but on the whole, these are friends who I made through vexillology or heraldry. Such as Sheriff George Way of Plean and Kevin Greig who spoke at our conference in Edinburgh.

However, there are rare occasions where someone from outside the field of vexillology gets drawn in. This last London conference was graced by the appearance and words of one Patrick Rennie, talking on the topic of interplanetary vexillology. This was a particularly pleasant surprise for me, as Patrick happens to be a member of my team in the day job.

We both work for a company called Reaction Engines, which has been developing technologies for hypersonic flight and space access. It was whilst waiting together on a Teams call that I learnt of his role as President of the Mars society. I suggested that a talk about Mars Society flag proposals would be very interesting, and he said he would see if he could find anyone to give a presentation.

Vexillology rarely lets anyone escape when it starts to get into your life, as all our committee members will attest! As such Patrick ended up being the speaker himself. He was most surprised when he discovered that the designer of one of the proposals he was talking about was sitting in front of him during the conference.

It is wonderful to know that out of a personal connection that someone has been drawn into vexillology, and that might not be the end of the story either. From this initial presentation it looks like there will be more cooperation on the subject of interplanetary flags.

I think this is a real reminder of the nearly unending breadth and depth of vexillology, in that it touches on so many other topics; from heraldry to sexuality, from community's to the military and even now to outer space. It is great to speak to other vexillologists at our conferences – long may they continue – but we should never be afraid of talking about our favourite topic away from those, you never know who you might interest in getting involved. As Patrick has shown, the sky's the limit for vexillology. ☐

Code Flag over H

'Heave to, I have something important to communicate'

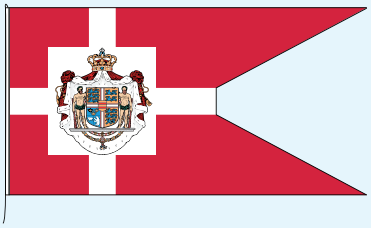
Contributions: John Cartledge, Jos Poels, Līga Rancāne, Marcel Sjoers, Ian Sumner and Leigh Wetherall

Moldova (1) The Moldovan Government has banned the use of the old Russian black, yellow and white triband. Following a recent court judgement in Chisinau, the flag has been officially declared as 'extremist'.

Although the flag was once the flag of the Russian Empire between 1858 and 1896, it is now actively used by Russian nationalist, monarchist and patriotic organisations. The imperial tricolour in the Russian Federation is also a symbol of chauvinism, often flown by pro-Putin supporters. It also appears on the emblems of some military units of the Russian Federation (for example, the sabotage and assault reconnaissance group 'Rusych'), currently fighting against Ukraine.

This decision by the Moldovan Government follows another of April 2022, when the Cyrillic letters V and Z and the black and orange ribbon of St George – all prominent in the war against Ukraine – were also banned, punishable by a fine and community service. *(IS)*

Denmark (2) All change in Denmark following the proclamation of King Frederick X on Sunday 28 April. The Royal Flag (*Kongeflaget*) flying above Queen Margrethe's residence, Christian IX's Palace at Amalienborg, was lowered, and replaced by the Royal House Flag (*Kongehusflaget*). The Royal Flag is a swallow-tailed Dannebrog, bearing the full Danish Royal achievement of arms in the centre on a white square. The Royal House Flag is also a swallow-tailed Dannebrog, but the arms are replaced by a simple crown.

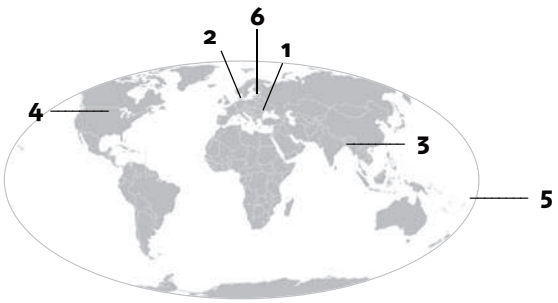


At the same time, the Heir's Flag (*Tronfølgerflaget*) will be replaced by the Royal Flag on the neighbouring Frederik VIII's Palace, the home of the new King, Frederik X. The Heir's Flag is another swallow-tailed Dannebrog, but the full arms are replaced by the simple arms of Denmark under a crown and surrounded by the chain of the Order of the Elephant. *(IS)*

Bangladesh (3) An article in the Winter 2021 edition of *Flagmaster* 163, commemorating the golden jubilee of the national flag of Bangladesh, noted that there were conflicting claims regarding the identity of its designer. The matter has now been clarified. On 19 April 2024 the *Dhaka Business Post* contained an obituary notice headed 'National flag's first designer Shib Narayan passes away'. It recorded that:

'On June 7, 1970, ... Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was scheduled to take part in a student parade … For this purpose, a squad of students was formed named the 'February-15 Force.' The student leaders decided to create a flag for this force.

On June 6 [1970] … [various student] leaders ... sat in the … Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall of Dhaka University to discuss the flag plan ... it was decided to make a flag with a yellow map of Bengal in the middle of the red sun on the green ground. Kamrul Alam Khan then stitched a red circle in the middle of a large piece of green cloth from a Bihari tailor's shop … Then the map of East Pakistan was drawn on tracing paper with an atlas ... Shib Narayan Das finally drew



the map with a skilful hand in the middle of the red circle.' *(JC)*

South Dakota (4) In South Dakota, a bill that would have created a commission to study and possibly propose a new state flag design to the Legislature and Governor failed in the Senate State Affairs Committee by 5 votes to 3 in January.

Supporters of the bill, sponsored by Democratic Senator Reynold Nesiba of Sioux Falls, said a redesign could increase awareness of the state and foster pride and unity among South Dakotans.

South Dakota's flag has 17 words – more than any other state and including the name 'South Dakota' spelled out twice – and includes an intricate state seal on a blue background. According to supporters of change, such a wordy and complicated design prevents the flag from being used on merchandise and discourages South Dakotans from identifying with and flying the flag themselves.

The legislators who voted against the bill said the current flag does its job well enough; tradition is important, and the state doesn't need to modernize its flag for reasons of Public Relations. *(IS)*

Cook Islands (5) The Cook Islands in the Pacific Ocean, which has extensive autonomy under the flag of New Zealand, may be about to return to the flag that was created in January 1973. That flag – a green field with a circle of fifteen yellow stars in the fly – was replaced in June 1979 by the current flag, a British Blue Ensign with a white circle of stars in the fly.

The green flag of the Cook Islands was designed by the archipelago's then Prime Minister, Albert Royle Henry. Henry was nicknamed Papa Arapati, for his tireless efforts to build the archipelago. Green was the 'colour of life and eternal growth', while the stars represented the fifteen islands that make up the Cook Islands, although not all of them are inhabited.

Papa Arapati was removed from political office in the 1978 elections after it emerged he had committed electoral fraud. He pleaded guilty to two conspiracy charges and one of corruption. He fell into disrepute, and with him 'his' flag.

The Cook Islands are on their way to full independence. Recently appointed Prime Minister Mark Brown now wants Papa Arapati's flag to be restored, after Arapati was granted a posthumous pardon in August by the King's Representative. Prime Minister Brown: 'He [Papa Arapati] designed a new national flag consisting of 15 gold stars in a circle on a green background. A flag that represents our national colours and reflects our identity as the Cook Islands is something that we as a country may need to reconsider.' *(JP)*

Sēlija (6) The flag of Sēlija (Selonia) was made official on 10 January 2024, when President Edgars Rinkēvičs signed Presidential Order 1 'About the flag of the historical land of Sēlija'. Three of the five historical lands in Latvia now have an official flag, which all look like the national flag

Code Flag over H

(See *Flagmaster* 167, Winter 2023).

The Sēlija flag was blessed in Sunākste Church, and adopted during the First Selonian Congress in Viesite on 22 May 1999. The flag was approved by the Heraldic Commission of Latvia, but it still did not have official status.

The flag is modelled on the Latvian flag and has the same proportions. The red (upper)-white-green (lower) stripe ratio of the flag is 2:1:2. The width to length ratio of the flag is 1:2.

The colours are dark/carmine red, white and green. Academic Jānis Stradiņš has said in his publications that the green colour should be moss green, as Selonia is a swampy region. The colours are also the same as those used by the oldest student association in the country, 'Selonija', which was founded in Riga in 1880. *(LR)*

Bi-inclusion Progress Pride flag (7) On 31 March, the bi-inclusive Progress Pride flag was flown from the office of London's Mayor, Sadiq Khan, to celebrate *Trans Day of Visibility*. Khan, who has previously been targeted because of his support for the LGBTQ+ community, said, 'This flag recognises intersections within the LGBTQ+ community, honouring LGBTQ+ people of colour – whose activism inspired the very first Pride – as well as different gender identities.'

The original eight-striped LGBTQ+ Pride flag was designed in 1978 by Gilbert Baker. It was first made with seven stripes because pink fabric was unavailable. It became the recognisable six-colour design in 1979. It was updated in 2018, with the 'Progress' Pride flag, designed by Daniel Quasar, who added black and brown stripes to represent people of colour. Stripes of baby blue, pink and white were later added to represent the trans community.

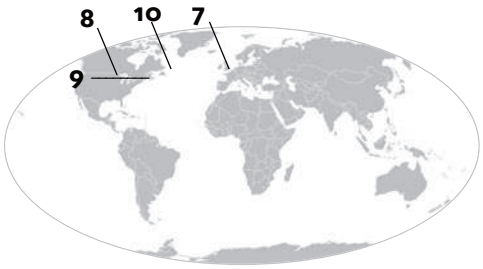
The bi-inclusive flag lets people show their support for the LGBTQ+ community, or to draw attention to the erasure the bisexual community often faces. *(LW)*

Minnesota (8) The American state of Minnesota unveiled a new flag on 11 May 2024. The flag consists of two parts; in the hoist, a dark blue field bears a white, 8-pointed star, representing the North Star State, as Minnesota is known. One of the points of the star points north. The dark blue field represents the shape of the state of Minnesota. The other half of the flag is light blue, representing the Land of 10,000 Lakes, as Minnesota is also known.

In a very short span of time Minnesota has become the second US state, after Utah, to swap its almost unrecognizable flag – sometimes called a bedsheet – for a clearly recognisable flag.

In 2023, the State of Minnesota established a *State Emblems Redesign Commission* to design a new flag and seal. The Commission consisted of thirteen voting members from all walks of life and four non-voting members, representing political parties. The Commission invited the public to submit designs and to comment on the designs during the process. Some 2,128 designs were submitted for the future flag, and 399 for the new state seal. On 21 November, the Commission selected six flag designs for the final round. On 12 December, the designers were invited to present their designs to the Commission and explain their inspiration and thoughts about the flag they had designed.

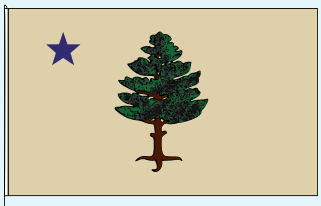
The final flag (and seal) was selected by Commission members on 15 December. Final changes



to the design were discussed and approved on 19 December. At the final Commission meeting on 27 December, members approved the final report and officially adopted the colours of the flag and seal. *(MS)*

Maine (9) The citizens of the US state of Maine could vote on whether to change the state flag under a proposal put forward in July 2023.

The original proposal would have changed the current seal-on-a-bedsheet design, adopted in 1909, to the original 1901 version with a pine tree and a blue star placed on a buff field.



Supporters of the 1901 design have argued that it is unique among other state flags while still representing Maine's heritage. But opponents like the blue background and are reluctant to change

But the original 1901 legislation contained no illustration of what contemporary lawmakers intended. The flag was to be tan with a pine tree proper in the centre and the polar star (a five-pointed star), in blue in the upper corner, but no further details were given, so several versions exist. No reasons were given for the change in 1909.

After modern lawmakers repeatedly squabbled over which version of the flag best represented the state, they finally agreed to an amendment that would let voters decide. An attempt to postpone the decision until 2026, allowing a commission to present alternative designs failed early in 2024.

Once a suitable version of the pine tree flag has been chosen, voters will be asked, 'Do you favour making the former state flag, replaced as the official flag of the State in 1909 and commonly known as the Pine Tree Flag, the official flag of the State?' The referendum will take place in November 2024. *(IS)*

Nova Scotia (10) The Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, in Canada, has a new personal flag. The flag flies on vehicles and at Government House when the Lieutenant Governor is in residence, and on any building or Canadian vessel where the Lieutenant Governor is present.

The old version featured the arms of the province placed in the centre of a Union Flag, surrounded by a wreath of eighteen green maple leaves. Nova Scotia was the last Canadian province to use this pattern of flag, originally introduced in 1869.

The new version now follows the pattern set by the other Lieutenant Governors, i.e. plain blue with the Emblem of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in the centre.

The emblem of Nova Scotia was granted by the Chief Herald of Canada on 20 July 2007. It consists of the arms of 1625, now ensigned by the Tudor Crown, within a wreath of ten gold maple leaves, representing the ten provinces of Canada. It is the primary visual identity symbol of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and is also used on the Lieutenant Governor's letterhead, envelopes, business cards, the licence plates on the Lieutenant Governor's car, lapel pins and other items. The version with the new crown is only being introduced as supplies of the older version become exhausted.

The flag was updated through Letters Patent, published in the *Royal Gazette* on 22 May 2024. It was inaugurated on Victoria Day, His Majesty the King's official birthday, 20 May 2024 after a brief ceremony outside Government House in Halifax. *(IS)*

Malcolm Good talks with

Alan Hardy Taking Liberties with State Flags

Over the last decade Alan Hardy has deepened his interest in flags from a general appreciation to one where he now owns about 750 items in 3 foot x 5 foot fomat. In particular, he is interested in how people relate to the symbolism contained in flags with a special focus on US state flags. Alan tells Flagmaster about his on-line work with the Facebook page 'U.S. State Flags – Current, Historic and Proposed,' which develops proposals and encourages improvements to many US state flags.

Q: What prompted your interest in US state flags?

Our family had an old atlas in which flags from across the world were illustrated in the first few pages, but there was also an extra plate showing US flags. It caught my attention that the US was made up of so many parts, each with its own flag, some of which had a distinct design while many others did not. My interest really deepened about ten years ago when questions were raised about the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia flag forming the canton of the Mississippi state flag. I worked up an alternative design and sent it to Governor Phil Bryant. After that, I created redesigns for each of the 50 US states, which I showed at the 2016 Flag Institute winter gathering. Since then, US state flags have been my primary flag interest and focus. That said, I do also consider US county and city flags and my first major push for a change to create a better flag was for the city of Tulsa. Furthermore, a project to look at the failed redesigns for Manchester, New Hampshire was also really interesting, and I think the alternate winning design was good.

Q: Why do you think some US state flags need to be changed?

Many of these flags were developed during times of historic turbulence and have not been updated to suit a modern world where people are more connected in a 'global village.' While some of them are truly loved, for others I think American broadcaster Roman Mars summed it up, and I paraphrase: 'If you don't see the flag being privately flown then you must ask why? Maybe it just sucks?' Along with others, I have put forward proposals for all 50 state flags. That doesn't mean they should all be changed. Far from it. There is little appetite to alter the best flags like Texas, Ohio and Hawaii. In addition to whole scale re-designs, I have been involved in pointing out inaccuracies in state flags where over time a mistake has been replicated. For example, research suggests that errors made in 1918 in the layout of the alternate gold and red on the Arizona state flag should be reversed to show metal at each extreme of the gyronny. While sometimes these may seem like small details, I think it is important to get things right and provide consistency.

Q: How do you prioritise which flags to concentrate on?

That is mostly decided following a democratic vote which determines those flags that are in 'most need' of revision. This also sees projects that did not lead to change when first considered being re-visited. For instance, study projects were carried out over 2018 and 2019 against sixteen state flags from which Idaho is now being re-

Photo Archive Alan Hardy, image editing Theun Okkerse

assessed by our group. Consideration is given to any demand for change and, of the flags in a process of change, we have kept doing new project work. It is interesting that usually about 300 to 800 design proposals are found when a flag is studied in detail. There is also a clear correlation, the greater the 'under-performance' of a flag, the higher the number of design proposals that are noted.

Q: What successes have you had?
For many years typically no more than one flag was under some form of change or consideration at any one time. Now though, prompted by work in this field and by some actually changing, there are about eleven in some form of flux. Success for me also includes getting the opportunity to talk with key individuals and pitch proposals. For example, discussing proposals with Massachusetts' House Representative Antonio Cabral and Massachusetts' Chief of Staff for the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, Kate Miller.

Q: What difficulties or barriers have you encountered?
Distance is the main problem as I am based in the UK. While the internet and email provide a useful way of communicating, I get the impression that it is so over used, that state legislators tend not to place too much weight on

the messages received that way. However, while attending the 2023 North American Vexillological Association (NAVA57) conference in Philadelphia, I was able to visit twelve state capital buildings and leave a prototype state flag at most, along with a summary of work done to-date on the proposed revision of that state's flag. Also, there can be some resistance due to me being British and pressing for design changes to flags that I am more removed from than local people. I do though try and tailor my comments to each audience. However, it is the 'pond' which is still the main barrier.

'There can be some resistance due to me being British and pressing for design changes to flags that I am more removed from than local people'

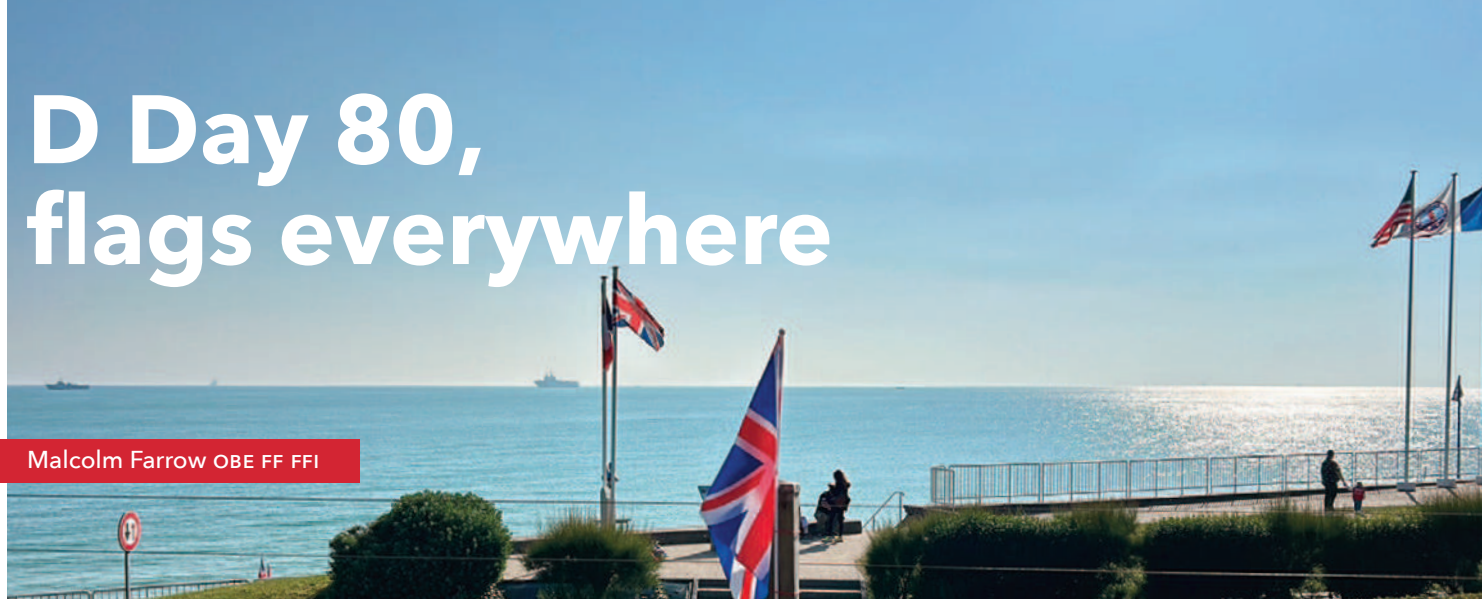
Q: What are the key ingredients of a well-designed alternative state flag?
Usually it is the removal of overly complex details, but with key aspects being accentuated as was seen with the use of the beehive, or more specifically a historical skep, in the re-designed Utah state flag. Then limiting the number of colours used, ideally to 4 or fewer, removing text and gradients. Because they are often seen as a set of designs, each should have a common ratio of 3:5.

Q: What do you think of those US state flags that have changed recently?
Mississippi received about 3,200 interesting designs from which six flags in fabric were created, with each assessed for a short time on a flagpole. More time could have been taken to arrive at the final short list but there was pressure due to the cancellation of the incumbent flag. The addition of text is not something I would recommend but the end result, in my opinion, probably places this flag in the top dozen or so of US state flags. The Utah committee was outwardly less open, but by all accounts, very well organised and keen to improve the visual performance of its flag. The request for submissions was expansive and provided space to find a route to a good solution. The final design is interesting and feels right with its representation of mountains, snow, water, red rocks and communal strength. I prepared a 17-page summary paper for final comment and fellow vexillologist, Brian Cham, provided input as part of his role for NAVA. It is also interesting that the old flag remains on the books in a more senior position as the Historic State Flag. This probably sees the Utah state flag moving to a top six position when compared to other state flags. Minnesota previously used the state seal on its flag which was problematic due to its outdated depiction of first nation peoples. This made things more complex as the state seal was also under review at the same time as the flag. The *Minnesota Historical Society* did a great job in facilitating the process despite a desire to move quickly which meant that the window for submissions was quite short. A potential top twelve design when assessed against other state flags, but others in NAVA, like Ted Kaye, rate it much higher. With all these flags though, ultimately, time will tell, and the proof will come from how much the public embrace and fly their new state flags.

Q: What next?
We have four in-depth study projects to come: Tennessee, Colorado, Maryland and New Mexico. I will continue to 'do the rounds' but there may be some scope for movement with, particularly, Massachusetts, Maine and Illinois this year. Perhaps Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New York, Pennyslvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina and South Dakota in the years to come. Worth saying, I have retained the details behind many flag proposals and thus have a comprehensive depository of about 20,000 images which may be useful to others who wish to study this topic in the future. ☐

D Day 80, flags everywhere

Malcolm Farrow OBE FF FFI



In the very early morning on 6 June. USN helicopter carrier on horizon. (All Photos by the author)

Allied troops stormed the Normandy beaches on the 6th June, 80 years ago. The landings became known as the largest amphibious invasion in military history. It was the beginning of the liberation of Western Europe from Nazi Germany. The liberation is celebrated every year, but 2024 was a special celebration. Malcolm Farrow was there, not only to honour the casualties, but also to see what flags were flown and how.

I was privileged to visit Normandy during the D Day 80 commemorations in early June. I travelled by sea in a private capacity and in company with many hundreds of ex-Service people and families, including several nonagenarian veterans of the landings in 1944, and lots of national and local media.

We sailed by ferry from Portsmouth to Ouistreham on 4 June, returning on 7 June. The Jedburgh pipe band was on board and piped us out of harbour as sailors in HMS Prince of Wales manned the side to cheer the D Day veterans.

As I was not an official guest of the Normandy events I followed the camp in the wake of the VIP ceremonies on the following three days. I visited Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches as well as Bayeux Cathedral and the British and Canadian national cemeteries and memorials. I paused for reflection at numerous other small memorials which popped up all over the place as we drove along the country lanes and passed through villages. Only time, and the gendarmes locking down roads in succession for VIPs, prevented me visiting Utah Beach and the American cemetery.

6 June 2024. Dawn on Omaha Beach.

Deeply moving

It was a deeply moving and memorable experience well worth four sixteen-hour days, three of which began at 5am. The French organised it magnificently, and Normandy could not have been more welcoming to the tens of thousands of British, Canadian and American visitors who came to remember and pay our respects; and to those from many other allied nations present and other visitors from further afield too. D Day 80 was outstanding for a great many reasons, and one of those was the profusion of flags – absolutely everywhere.

Naturally, the main flags on display were the Tricolour, Union Jack, Maple Leaf and Stars and Stripes; and these four flags, in many guises and formats, were everywhere to be seen. They flew on public and private buildings alike; by roadsides, strung across streets, in shops, garages and restaurants and decorating the very numerous memorials large and small, as well as sprouting from fences, hedges and balconies, and streaming from hundreds of historic vehicles – wherever a flag could be flown, several were flown.

Imagine my surprise coming across this Yorkshire flag, just a few yards from Omaha beach. This one in the village of Camb, outside my bedroom window.

Many other flags were seen as well. All the allied nations had their flags displayed here and there, and the twin lions of Normandy were on patrol frequently as you would expect. So were lots of other relevant banners from far and wide. American flags nearly all had 50-stars rather than the 48-star version of 1944, although one group of veterans assured me, they had their 48 star flag ready to hoist. Likewise, it was the Maple Leaf, rather than the Red Ensign of Canada, which was most widely flown, although I did see a few Canadian Red Ensigns too. One unexpected flag was a large white rose on blue of Yorkshire! This was draped across a big house by Omaha Beach outside which were parked four jeeps which had come all the way from Yorkshire.

Jeeps

Jeeps – yes jeeps were all over the place. The WWII jeep was one of the most common vehicles on the Normandy roads that week. They bore many national number plates too. British, Danish, Austrian, Dutch, Swiss and so forth and of course American. But what did surprise me were how many French numberplates there were. The French certainly have a love affair with the jeep and historic vehicles in general. These jeeps, and the plethora of other WWII vehicles large, small and curious, were often driven by somebody in WWII uniform of some sort, but by no means always.

One thing all jeeps had in common were flags. Flags large and small of huge variety flew briskly from aerials sprouting from the jeeps and trucks. Nor could you always tell the nationality of the driver by his or her flags. You had to look at the modern numberplate lurking amidst the other markings for that.

At the recently commissioned British memorial in Ver-sur-Mer (unveiled three years ago) the White Ensign, RAF Ensign, Red Ensign and Army Flag fly as you would expect. Some of the smaller memorials bore ensigns too, and some vehicles driving around also flew ensigns but generally they were not so much seen. As I have worn a naval uniform for 39 years, I carried a White Ensign wherever I went. Twice it got me a lift along a winding road (once from an Italian) and avoided a long walk. The White Ensign had a bit of curiosity value in the country lanes of Normandy.

The cemeteries are so impressive, poignant and beautiful in their shocking way, and the Canadian cemetery is especially lovely. Unusually, flowers have been allowed to grow amidst the gravestones. Another Canadian feature was a small Maple Leaf flag on every grave (provided by the government), often combined with flags placed by relatives including the appropriate provincial flag (mostly Saskatchewan), cultural flag (Acadia), country of origin (I saw Finland) or regimental flag. All to reflect the far away home of the Serviceman buried beneath. It added to the poignancy, and it was hard not to shed a tear in these places. In the Canadian example with the small flags, I felt it was not just the nationality being stated but

A very typical stand of flags repeated in so many places.

National, cultural and regimental flags at the gravestones.

This one in the village of Camb, outside my bedroom window.

Town Halls were all decorated in a similar manner.

the very fabric of the identity of the people represented. It meant – and still means – so much to everyone who took part and to those remembering them. These people were not just soldiers, sailors or airmen. They were family. This is not easy to describe but they were, and are, our people.

Sunrise

I felt this too at sunrise on Omaha Beach when the Florida National Guard laid a wreath in the sea at the time the landings began, sounded the alert on a bugle, then a chaplain said a short prayer and a uniformed Major General said a few words. This was nothing to do with the official arrangements, just a spontaneous act of respect and homage to the guardsmen who died 80 years ago. They did wonder why a Limey sailor carrying a White Ensign was standing amongst them as dawn broke and was not at Gold or Sword Beach further along the coast, until I explained that my father had been off Omaha Beach in HMS Glasgow, bombarding the coastal defences before they went ashore. We were all in this enterprise together. The beach café owner where we had breakfast explained the café had been going for 100 years but was rebuilt after being destroyed in the war. I wondered if my father had something to do with that. There were the remains of a massive concrete bunker right outside it.

When tens of thousands of Union Jacks are flown within a relatively small area, we all look to see if they are the right way up. This was no exception. Within minutes of boarding the ferry on 4 June I found one upside down in the

Allies on Omaha Beach.

canteen but a word to a purser had it changed. Once ashore I was pleased to see that by far the majority were correct and the incidence of upside down was certainly no more than you might expect to see in UK and possibly less. There were of course exceptions including at our Airbnb but in the main it was a case of well-done France. The most striking example was on a British jeep manned by former paratroopers. We had a ribald exchange – you must have been in the Navy, one said as I explained how to get it right. We parted with much laughter.

The weather was perfect, and that included not much wind. Taking good pictures of flags is fraught with frustration and especially in light airs. I did my best, but I was not there to take pictures.

I offer my profound thanks to the people of Normandy, and to France, for hosting a magnificent commemoration of one of Europe's defining moments, and for making us all so very welcome. ☐

'Then, now and forever British'

Cook Islands: Mangaia's Victoria Flag

WIKIPEDIA

Rod Dixon

A Pilot Jack, with Queen Victoria's head painted on the hoist, has become a symbol of office for successive chiefs of the tiny Pacific Island of Mangaia in the Southern Cook Islands. Following annexation by New Zealand the flag also became a symbol of the islanders' resistance to colonial rule (1901 – 1965) and their determination to retain sovereignty over their lands.

Mangaia is the most southerly island of the Cook Islands and the second largest after Rarotonga. The island was visited by Captain Cook in March 1777 on his final journey of discovery. It was subsequently Christianized by agents of the London Missionary Society from 1824.

In 1888 the chiefs of the neighbouring island of Rarotonga successfully petitioned the British Government to declare a Protectorate over the Cook Islands in response to provocations from the French. A reluctant Mangaia had to be 'duly persuaded' and accepted Protectorate status only after assurances that 'All laws and customs at present recognised will remain in force, and the Ariki's or Chief's administration over the island would not be interfered with.' This included the administration of land, the subject of 42 territorial wars in the island's thousand-year history.

In 1900 the Premier of New Zealand, Hon. Richard Seddon, visited the Cook Islands to meet with traditional leaders with a view to the islands' annexation. A year later the British Governor of New Zealand, Lord Ranfurly, visited Mangaia to seek the chiefs' agreement to formal annexation to the British Empire. The Mangaian chiefs agreed to 'cede to Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, the sovereignty of Mangaia, subject only to the condition that it shall be annexed as part and parcel of the British Empire.' Ranfurly failed to mention that the islands would be administered as a colony of New Zealand.

Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), the Māori ethnographer and author of *Mangaian Society* (1934) observed that, 'Mangaians did not want to be part of New Zealand and called for a secession and reversion to Protectorate status as part of Great Britain'.[1]

A focus of their resistance was the jurisdiction of the colonial Land Court, the New Zealand administration's vehicle for individualising and commercialising land which traditionally was collectively owned and administered by the chiefs. 'Mangaia' the chiefs asserted 'is under Queen Victoria and part of the British Dominions and therefore the land is still in our hands.'[2] For the entirety of the 60 year colonial era, the Court was actively prevented from adjudicating on Mangaia and today all land and succession issues remain under the mana or authority of the islands' chiefs.

Central to Mangaia's claim to ongoing 'British Protectorate status' is the British 'Victoria flag' (the *reva paratane*) – a British Pilot Flag or 'Pilot Jack' on which Queen Victoria's head has been crudely painted.

1. (Right) Numangatini Ariki Ongoaere Louisa Ngaroiti, then Ariki or Chief of Mangaia and her husband Ngariki Pakuivi with the British 'Victoria flag' or reva paratane, circa 1985.

2. The Premier of New Zealand, Richard Seddon with King Togia of Niue. 1 June 1900. The painted Queen Victoria head on the flag's hoist is seen at bottom left (photo – Seddon 1900; 223)

According to Mangaian tradition, the flag had been given to Numangatini Ariki of Mangaia by Queen Victoria as part of a gift exchange [tāki'oa], formally linking Mangaia to the British Crown for all time. This exchange was, in turn, reciprocated by Mangaian gifts of land to the Queen and Crown. As Mangaian historian Tereevangeria Aratangi explained –

> 'When Queen Victoria visited New Zealand, all the Pacific kings went to meet her and give her gifts. The Mangaian king was Metuakore …. The Mangaian king was second to last, the last was the King of Tonga. The Mangaian king had been told by missionaries to bow and walk away facing the Queen. He was given a walking stick, stamp and flag. The King of Tonga followed the Mangaian king's example, and also got a flag.'[3]

European history records no such encounter between the Ariki of Mangaia and Queen Victoria, nor even a visit by the Queen to New Zealand. The only known meeting between a Mangaia Ariki and a future King and Queen of England occurred in July 1901 in Auckland when Metuakore Numangatini, the third Ariki of Mangaia, was presented to Prince George, Duke of Cornwall and York, the grandson of Queen Victoria, and the future King George V. The event was marked by the presentation of a gold medal to the Mangaian chief.

The flag is more probably one of three, possibly four, similar flags presented to the King of Niue, the Ariki Makea of Rarotonga and the Ariki of Mangaia, with a fourth possibly gifted to the King of Tonga, during the Pacific voyage of the New Zealand premier Richard Seddon in May 1900. *(Photo 2)*

On the island of Niue, Premier Seddon was photographed sitting beside King Togia, with the 'Victoria Jack' – that is the Pilot Jack with a painting of Queen Victoria's head – wrapped around them. According to the official record -

> 'Mr Seddon presented the King [of Niue] with a large Union Jack, a gift with which the native ruler was evidently much pleased. The New Zealand Premier told them that as long as the British flag floated over them, they would be free from foreign invasion or trouble of any kind with their neighbours. The flag was the emblem of their being children of the great Queen and Empress. All then adjourned to the open air where the King and chiefs gave

3. The Rarotonga flag (photo – Michel Lupant, 2005)

4. The crudely painted Victoria head on the hoist of the Rarotongan flag (photo – Michel Lupant, 2005)

> a song of welcome and photographs were taken – one of the King and Mr. Seddon with the British flag.'[4]
> 'Your King and I' Seddon told the people of Niue, 'have sat together with the British flag around us and with the spirit of our good and gracious Queen Victoria upholding that flag, it will show to the world to which power Niue belongs and the people here will be protected and ever happy. You hold and possess the best flag in the islands.'[5]

Seddon's next call was at Rarotonga where, it appears, he presented a similar flag to the Ariki Makea of Te Au o Tonga, in the port district of Rarotonga. In *Flags of the Cook Islands* Michel Lupant records meeting in 2005, the daughter of the late Makea Nui Teremoana Ariki, who 'showed us the huge flag from 1888, more than two metres high.' Jiří Tenora immediately recognised the British Pilot flag. A sailor had painted the face of Queen Victoria along the flagpole. That flag was more than a century old and has suffered from damage, specially from clothes moth.'[6] *(Photos 3, 4)*

Makea Ariki's daughter dated the flag to 1888, the year in which the British Protectorate was declared over the Cook Islands. However, the flag as illustrated in Lupant's paper bears a strong resemblance to both Seddon's Niue flag of 1900 and the reva paratane of Mangaia.

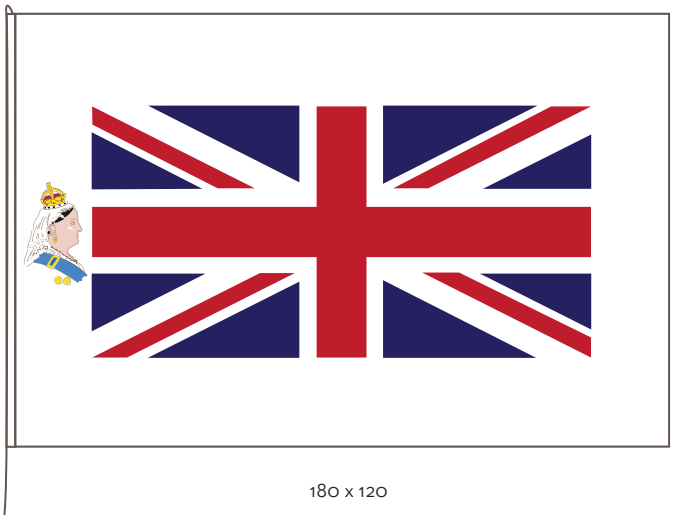
After visiting Rarotonga, Seddon proceeded to Mangaia where 'a British flag' was presented to the two reigning Ariki of Mangaia – Metuakore John Trego Ariki and Nooroa Numangatini Ariki. The official record of the visit reported –

> 'Mr Seddon with Resident Commissioner, Colonel Gudgeon and interpreter, Mr Goodwin made a visit to the house of the Ariki who is called by visitors 'King John' because his full name was John Trego. When the principal persons had assembled and greeted the New Zealand Premier, Mr Seddon then presented a Union Jack to the Arikis who thanked him warmly and expressed their pleasure at the visit.'[7]

On Mangaia, the 'Victoria flag' is considered Tapu (holy or sacred) and is only displayed on ceremonial occasions, it is rarely photographed. However, in 1956, a photograph of the flag appeared alongside an article in the *Auckland Star* which noted that 'it had

A cherished possession of Mangaia's two arikis, or chiefs, is the Union Jack presented to the island by Queen Victoria, before New Zealand annexed the Cook Islands. Kept in a cedar chest, the flag is in perfect

5. The Mangaian flag, Auckland Star*, 8 December 1956, displayed by Rangi Numangatini Ariki (right) and Tungane Ariki vaine (left).*



180 x 120

6. A reproduction of the reva paratane commissioned for the installation of Tangi Tereapii Trego Numangatini Ariki in August 2020.

been presented to the island by Queen Victoria before New Zealand annexed the Cook Islands. 'The flag depicts the elderly Queen in profile and a Union Jack on a white background' *(Photo 5)*.

In 1991, on the death of the seventh Numangatini Ariki Ongoaere Louisa Ngaroiti, members of the Trego Ariki line disputed the succession of Nooroa Numangatini as the eighth Ariki of Mangaia. Coincidentally, at this time, the reva paratane, a symbol of Ariki office, disappeared and remains missing to this day. On the death of Nooroa Numangatini in 2020, a reproduction was commissioned and flown at the investiture of the ninth and current Numangatini Ariki, Tangi Tereapii *(Photo 6)*.

During World War II, Matekeiti, the fourth Numangatini Ariki, wrote to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Peter Fraser, offering the Government a gift of land for a wartime airport. In his letter, he referred to the ongoing importance of the Mangaia's British status as embodied in the 'Victoria flag'. Matekeiti Ariki wrote,

> 'From the day Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria's portrait was hoisted on Mangaia, our soil has been free ever since and that flag from then, now and forever will live as a remembrance of Her Majesty for generations to come. It is our wish, therefore, to remain free under the shade of the British flag.' ☐

Footnotes

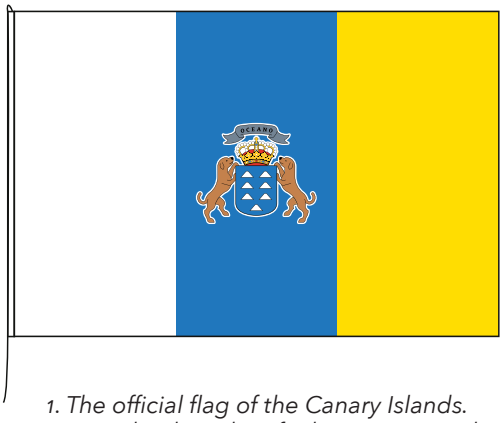
1. Hiroa, Te Rangi (Sir Peter Buck), 1993, *Mangaia and the Mission,* Institute of Pacific Studies and Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Suva and Honolulu, 58 fn 23.
2. Island Council member Angareu of Veitatei – report of an Island Council meeting, 21 October 1949.
3. Reilly, Michael, 2009, *Ancestral Voices from Mangaia; A History of the Ancient Gods and Chiefs,* The Polynesian Society, Auckland, 70.
4. *The Right Hon. R.J. Seddon's (the Premier of New Zealand) visit to Tonga, Fiji, Savage Island, and the Cook Islands: May 1900,* J. McKay, Government Printer, Wellington, New Zealand; 142, 153.
5. ibid.; 425.
6. Michel Lupant notes that because of the poor condition of the original Rarotongan flag, a replica had been made. A photograph of the replica appears in his article. Lupant observes that the reproduced Jack has been printed upside down and the head of Victoria has been more expertly executed. See Lupant, Michel R., 2007, *Flags of the Cook Islands,* Paper given to the 22nd International Congress of Vexillology, Berlin 2007. https://fiav.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ICV22-02-Lupant-CookIslands.pdf
7. *The Right Hon. R.J. Seddon's (the Premier of New Zealand) visit to Tonga, Fiji, Savage Island, and the Cook Islands: May 1900,* J. McKay, Government Printer, Wellington, New Zealand; 265.

A study of the history, meaning and use of the flags of the Canary Islands

The flag of the Islands of the Dogs

Juan Cornelio Artero Cardenal

White, blue and yellow are the popular colours of the Canary Islands, the Spanish-owned archipelago off the west coast of North Africa. Their use can be traced back to 1632. It is believed a century-and-a-half later the British explorer James Cook, who visited the Canaries brought a flag in these colours to Britain. The same colours were later embraced by organisations demanding autonomy or even independence for the 'Island of the Dogs'.



1. The official flag of the Canary Islands. Notice the thin white fimbriation around the coat of arms. It is common in Spanish flags to have the local coat of arms as a centrepiece.

The etymology of the name 'Canary Islands' (Spanish: *Islas Canarias*) is very interesting; the word 'Canary', does not come from the little yellow bird of the same name, but from the Latin word for dog: 'Canis'.[1] This means that 'Canary Islands', if taken from Latin, could be translated as 'The Islands of the Dogs'.

This feeds into one of the theories of how the Canaries were originally inhabited; the Romans knew of the islands' existence, and since they found so many dogs, they called them the Islands of the Dogs, and proceeded to use the Canaries as prison islands for Berber ethnic groups from North Africa who opposed their ruling.

The inevitable fact is that dogs are a very characteristic and widely used symbol in the Canary Islands; so much so that there is even a breed of dog that originally comes from the Canary Islands, the *'Presa Canario'*. Gran Canaria, the second most populated island and one of the two capitals, could also be

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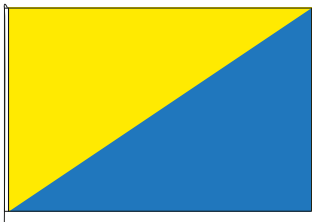
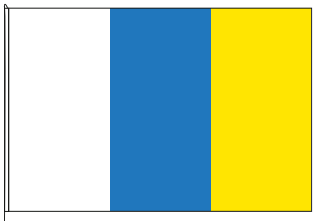
2. The flag of Tenerife.



3. The flag of the province of Las Palmas. Although it also has no official meaning, a popular song from the local football team roughly states that 'Blue in the pant like the wide sea. And I carry a sand-coloured shirt. The yellow from Las Canteras that is the lung of our city'.[18] So, the blue is for the sea and the yellow for the sand.



4. The civil flag of the Canary Islands.

5. The first registered flag of the Canary Islands.

translated as 'Big Dog'. Therefore, dogs have a very important meaning in the flag of the Canary Islands. Technically, the dogs are on the coat of arms of the Canary Islands, and since the coat of arms is on the flag, the dogs are on the flag too.

Elements and meaning

The current flag of the archipelago was captured in article 6 the '*Estatuto de Autonomía*', the Autonomy Statute of 10 August 1982 *(Illustration 1).* It is composed of three vertical bands of the same size. From left to right white, blue and yellow, with the full coat of arms in the central blue stripe.

The arms have a white fimbriation.

There is no official meaning to the colours of the flag.[2] But the most extended meaning of them all is that white and blue are representative of the province of Tenerife, while blue and yellow represent the province of Las Palmas. This is important because there has been a historical rivalry between the two provinces that form the Canaries, and the two most important islands in those provinces are Tenerife and Gran Canaria. This is called the *'Pleito Insular'* – 'Insular debate'.

Both colours are representative of these two provinces because they are in the flags of each. The Canary Islands flag is a combination of both flags. If we draw a vertical line on a map of the Canaries they match the geographical location of both islands, with Tenerife to the left (westward) and Gran Canaria to the right (eastward).

The flag of the maritime province of Tenerife was established on 9 May 1989 *(Illustration 2).* Interestingly, it is the same as the Scottish saltire flag, and at the same time a mystery. It is believed many Scottish merchants immigrated to the island and hence brought the flag with them.[3] A less interesting version of the meaning is that the white represents the snow of the Teide, the island's volcano and highest peak in Spain; while the blue is for the sea.

The flag of the maritime province of Las Palmas *(Illustration 3)* came into use on 10 April 1989. Yellow and blue are two very widely used and characteristic colours of Gran Canaria, which is on the flag of the local football club, the *'Unión Deportiva Las Palmas'* (UDLP).

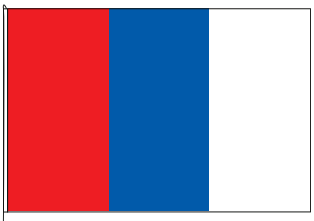
There is also a widely extended flag of the Canary Islands, which can be seen across balconies all over the archipelago. The civilian, shield-less variation of the flag according to the autonomy statute *(Illustration 4).*

Evolution and variations

The Canary Islands have gone through some other flags across history. The first ever recorded flag to represent the Canaries is the one described for the first time in 1632 in a book about the conquest of the Canaries by the Spaniards[5] *(Illustration 6).* It is the same flag as the actual one, with three vertical stripes of white, blue and yellow, but with a red cross (higher than wider) in the middle, in what can only be described as an unbelievable historic coincidence.

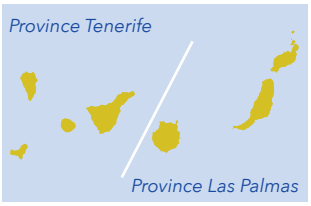
7. Alleged Canary Islands' flag brought to England by James Cook.
(National Maritime Museum Greenwich AAA0890)

8. José M. Erbez's interpretation[19] *of Nicolás Estévanez's poem.*



9. The author's interpretation of the flag described in Estévanez's poem.

10. The first ever national(ist) flag for the Canary Islands, designed in the Ateneo de La Laguna and adopted by the Cuba-based PNC.



11. A map of the Canary Islands, see the difference between the provinces of Tenerife and Las Palmas, and the rough location of the isles represented in the 1927 Ateneo flag.

In 2017, a yellow-blue-white flag was found in the British Museum, seemingly belonging to the famed British explorer James Cook *(Illustration 7)*. The captain visited the Canary Islands in 1768 and in 1780, and it is thought that he might have brought the flag back home from the archipelago; so the symbology and design of the Canarian flag would have been in use when James Cook visited the islands.[6]

With the turn of the 20th century (and even before), and the advent of a republic of Spain, some poets began to describe how in their dreams a flag of the Canary Islands would look like, one of them was Nicolás Estévanez y Murphy, who once wrote (translated from Spanish):

> The Spanish flag
> will always be the flag of my fatherland.
> But in the shade of the August canvas,
> With the colours of mother Spain,
> till shine before the worlds
> the tricolour flag of the Canaries;
> flag that in my dreams
> appears to me red, white and blue;
> in a red canvas
> the blue Teide with snowed peaks [7]

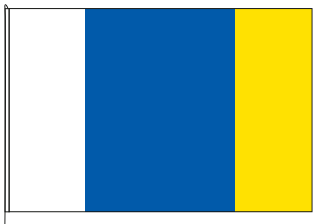
But because of the ambiguity in the last few lines, the flag could be interpreted as either *Illustration 8* (by José M. Erbez) or as *Illustration 9* (by the author).

Social and political movements began to emerge in the Canary Islands and abroad, with the aim of improving the autonomy of the Canary Islands, and some wanting full independence from Spain. One of these was the *'Partido Nacionalista Canario'* – Nationalist Canarian Party – (PNC) founded in Cuba, which together with Venezuela is regarded as the eighth island of the Canary Islands due to the large diaspora of Canarians there. The PNC adopted this flag in 1927[8] *(Illustration 10)*, designed originally in the *'Ateneo'* (Athenaeum) de *La Laguna*, a city in Tenerife culturally important to the Canaries because the first ever university was located there. The Ateneo is a private cultural institution visited by important Canarian figures of the 19th and 20th centuries. The flag is a blue field with seven white, five-pointed stars, located roughly where the seven Canary Islands are in a map *(Illustration 11)*.

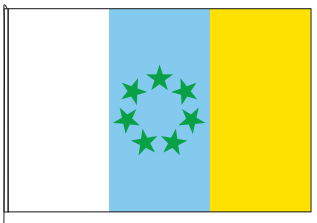
In the 1950s, other independentist groups of Canarian immigrants was set up in Venezuela. Maybe unaware of the already-existing flag of the

12. The flag of the Movimiento pro Independencia de Canarias. A combination of the two provincial flags.

13. The flag proposed by the Independent Republic of the Atlantic.



14. The first modern proposal for the Canary Islands. Designed by Canarias Libre.



15. The flag of the MPAIAC, now rebranded just as the nationalist flag of the Canaries.

Ateneo, they created a flag for their movement *'Movimiento pro Independencia de Canarias'* – 'Pro-Independence Movement of the Canaries' – (MIC) as a fusion of the two flags of the two provinces already described *(Illustration 12)*.

Another group called the *'República Independiente del Atlántico'* – 'Independent Republic of the Atlantic' – (RIC), with the flag seen in *Illustration 13,* a more creative fusion of the St. Andrew's saltire and the colours blue and yellow, along with seven five-pointed red stars.[9]

Apart from the 17th century, the first time we see a similar design to the modern flag of the Canary Islands is in 1967, when another nationalist group, the *'Canarias Libre'* – 'Free Canaries' – (CL) movement designed this flag *(Illustration 14)*. It was designed to be the combination of the flags of both the provinces; just as the current one is believed to represent. Just by looking at it, it can be seen that it is not a normal tricolour; and that is correct, this type of flag is known as a 'Canadian Pale',[10] a flag that has three vertical stripes, with a central stripe is double the width of the outer two. This is accidental, as the story goes, some members of Canarias Libre wanted to create a flag for the Canaries. Using a pile of paper, two members and their mother each cut a colour, and then stitched them together, accidentally making the middle stripe double the size of the other two. The following day the paper flags were dropped from the air on the municipality of Teror.[11]

In 1964, two terrorist groups, the 'Fuerzas Armadas Guanches' (Guanche [the name for the aboriginal people of the Canaries] Armed Forces) (FAG), and the *'Destacamentos Armados Canarios'* (Canarian Armed Detachments) (DAC) decided to create one political arm, to represent their interest politically. It was named *'Movimiento por la Autodeterminación e Independencia del Archipiélago Canario'* – 'Movement for Self-rule and Independence of the Canarian Archipelago' – (MPAIAC).[12] This political group was directed by Antonio Cubillo, an important figure in Canarian nationalism. Due to their illegal nature (wanting the independence of the Canary Islands and being a terrorist group), they had their headquarters in Algeria.

The MPAIAC had its own flag *(Illustration 15)*. It was described in the Final Resolution of 22 October 1964: 'Article XXVI: Our cry of independence will be 'Viva Canarias Libre' and the national flag will consist of three vertical stripes, one white, another light blue in the

Dog's collars

A noticeable feature of the official version of the flag of the Canary Islands is the archipelago's coat of arms. It consists of seven silver-coloured islands placed in a two-two-two-one formation on a blue shield. Supporting this emblem are two rampant dogs, canes in Latin. Then, placed on top of the central element is the crown of Spain, and above that, an inscription reading 'OCEANO', 'Ocean' in Spanish.

This coat of arms could be said to be a perfect encapsulation of everything the Canary Islands is about: 'dogs and islands'. There was some controversy some years ago regarding the coat of arms. Some political groups felt that the collars the dogs wore, should be omitted. The collars were seen as symbols of submission [4]. In the reform of the Autonomy Statute of November 2018 the dogs' collars were removed and are no longer seen on the official flags of the Canary Islands.

centre, and the third yellow. On the central stripe, in a circle, there will be seven green stars, that represent the equality of the seven islands on the blue sea. White, blue, and yellow are the national colours.'

Nowadays, the flag is recognised as the independentist, or nationalist flag of the Canary Islands because it stands for the independence of the Canaries. Supreme Court of Spain ruling recently prohibited it from being flown from public buildings.[13] It features, instead of the coat of arms of the islands, seven five-pointed green stars in the centre; hence the name of the flag, *'Las siete estrellas verdes'* (The seven green stars). You may notice that the blue and yellow are of a lighter shade, and that the stars are oriented in a strange way, not all looking upward like you see on the flag of the European Union. This is intentional. The 'bottom' two points of the stars are pointing to the centre, as a mark of unity. There are lots of variations of this flag, nearly all revolving around the stars, some have eight stars instead of seven – due to the official addition of La Graciosa as an island in 2018,[14] – or all the stars are looking upwards, or the stars are red, and so on and so forth.

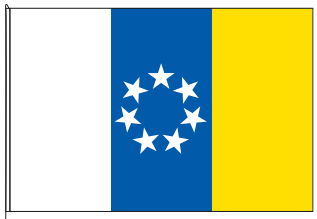
The seven stars symbolise the seven islands of the archipelago, and their colour, green, was supposed to be symbolic of the continent of Africa and the brotherhood that Canarians have with the people of Africa.

Autonomy

It is relevant to mention that the Canary Islands never had an official flag before the establishment of the Autonomous Community of the Archipelago in 1982. And as one would expect, there were many proposals and political discussions on what the first official flag of the Canaries should be.

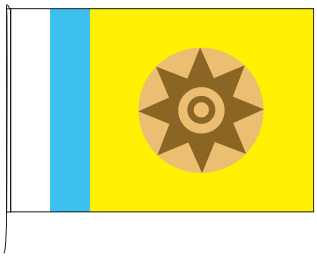
Left-wing elements of the Spanish and Canarian political scene proposed the MPAIAC flag with the seven green stars should be adopted, while right-wing elements proposed the plain Canarian flag, without any stars.

There was one proposal by the centre-left party PSOE, that was meant to be a compromise between the two positions *(Illustration 16)*. A vertical tricolour of blue, white, and yellow, with seven white five-pointed stars in a circle in the middle. Eventually, as we see today, the plain, no-star flag won the political battle.



16. The flag proposed by the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) in 1982.

In 2002 a group of members of the youth organisation Azarug declared the *'Awanyak n Teknara'*[15] (Spanish: *'República de Canarias'*; English: *'Republic of the Canaries'*). This event had no repercussions whatsoever on the archipelago, but it did add an interesting event to the timeline of the flag of the Canaries, as this proposed Republic had a flag *(Illustration 17)*.



17. The flag of the Republic of the Canaries, declared back in 2002. It features a Pintadera, a traditional symbol used by the aboriginals to represent themselves and their family.

The flag is composed of mainly a yellow field, with two thin blue and white stripes on the hoist side of the flag (emulating the actual flag of the islands) and an ancient aboriginal symbol on the middle of the yellow field. These symbols, called Pintaderas[16] are recurrent in aboriginal archeological sites. From what we know, they were prototherian coats of arms, that were representative of a family or individual and were even tattooed on the bodies, or stuck on the doors of houses.

Legacy and use

it is very common to walk along a street in Las Palmas, Santa Cruz, or any town and see either the civil flag or the seven green stars flag hanging from a balcony.

Because the MPAIAC flag evokes feelings of pride, nationalism, independence in those that use it, it is frequently referred to in popular media across the Canary Islands, including songs. An example would be the song 'Ach-Guañac'[17] by the independentist musical group Taburiente, that says:

A blue shining sea
With seven green stars,
The yellow of your wheat fields
And the white of the foam of the sea.

There are countless examples of homages to the white-blue-yellow flag of the Canaries throughout its history. If a flag is to be judged by how widely adopted and respected it is, then the flag of the Canary Islands, in all its forms, is a solid 10 out of 10.

Having said this all about the flag of the Canary Islands, we shouldn't forget there is another flag in use in the islands, which is the flag of mother country Spain. It can be seen hanging from balconies all over the territory. After the attempt by Catalonia to declare independence in 2017, and the emergence of right-wing parties like Vox, the Spanish flag is a notable feature of many buildings in Spain. However, the flag of Spain has found a rival in terms of popularity and usage in the flag of the Canary Islands and the 'seven green stars' flag. This is not unique to the Canaries, and a similar situation plays out in Catalonia and the Basque Country where national sentiment is high, and a local flag is prominent enough. This does not mean that the Spanish flag has been overshadowed, just that it coexists with the other flags, and it is still very common to see it hanging or flying depending on where you reside. □

* I would like to thank Teo García and Carolina Kiwitt for their assistance with the creation of this article.

Notes

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A short revision of the paper presented at the 29th International Congress of Vexillology in Ljubljana July 2022

Recognising Flags by Colour Ratios

Mike Thomas

Precise specifications of flag colour and layout are often lacking. Manufacturers interpret what is available within the limitations of the materials used. Take a photograph of a flying flag and areas may be obscured or have different light or shadow. Together these factors make comparing flags by colour complicated. This paper proposes a method of using the colour ratios (or proportions or percentages) to compare a flag photograph with the previously encoded images from the 'Flags of the World' web-site (FOTW).

Two-colour Flags

These can be flown in a straight line, from 100% of one colour at one end to 100% of the other colour at the other end. Picking some yellow and blue 'national' and signal flags gives *figure 1*.

Figure 2 is a scan of an analogue photograph taken in Stockholm in 2003, where the flags are about 140x160 pixels each. The Swedish flag is straightened and cropped to give *figure 3*, which is fuzzy because of the low resolution.

Shadow and fading are ignored by removing the whiteness from all pixels, and saturation is restored, giving 1536 hues. These are split into 10 hues: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Cyan, Blue, Magenta, Black, White, and Grey. (Note that Brown, Turquoise, and Purple are dark shades of Orange, Cyan, and Magenta respectively.) The percentage of each colour is then calculated, in this example 61% blue, 31% yellow, and 8% other. This flag image can then easily be positioned in the line of flags, and the flags rearranged in order of distance from the sought image, as shown in *figure 4* (not to scale).

The closest in this example is Sweden. The procedure applies for any two arbitrary colours.

Three-colour Flags

A third colour, green for the example below, can be added to the original yellow-to-blue line. Two-colour flags, with the new colour replacing one of the existing colours, can be flown in a straight line connecting the new colour with an existing colour. The loose ends, representing 100% green, are then joined to make a triangle. Yellow-blue-green flags are then planted within the triangle, according to the percentage of each colour that they contain. Gabon, with equal parts of the three colours, flies at the centre of the triangle. Other flags are more difficult to place. The distance between any two flags can be calculated by Pythagoras. 'Maths alert!': use the differences between the percentages for each colour as the lengths of the perpendicular sides of a right-angled triangle, square them, sum the squares for all the different colours, and finally take the square root of the sum to give the distance. All these distances will give the appropriate position within the flag triangle *(figure 5)*.

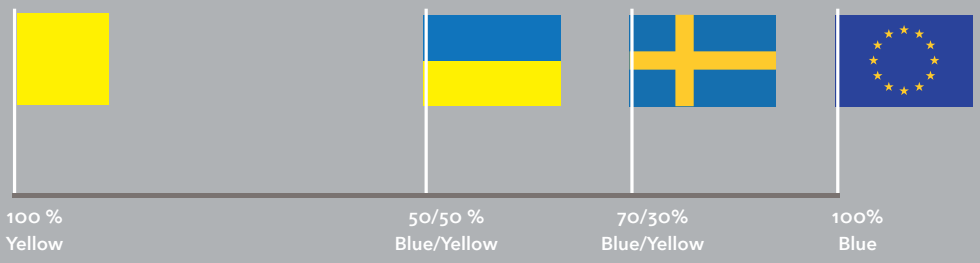


Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

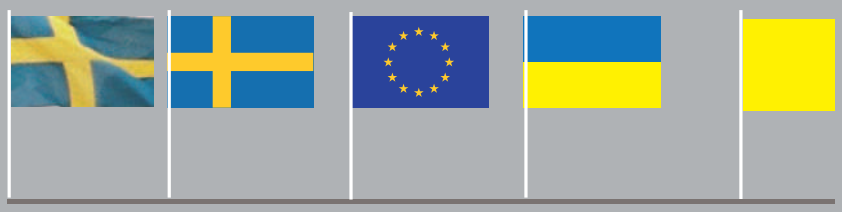


Figure 4

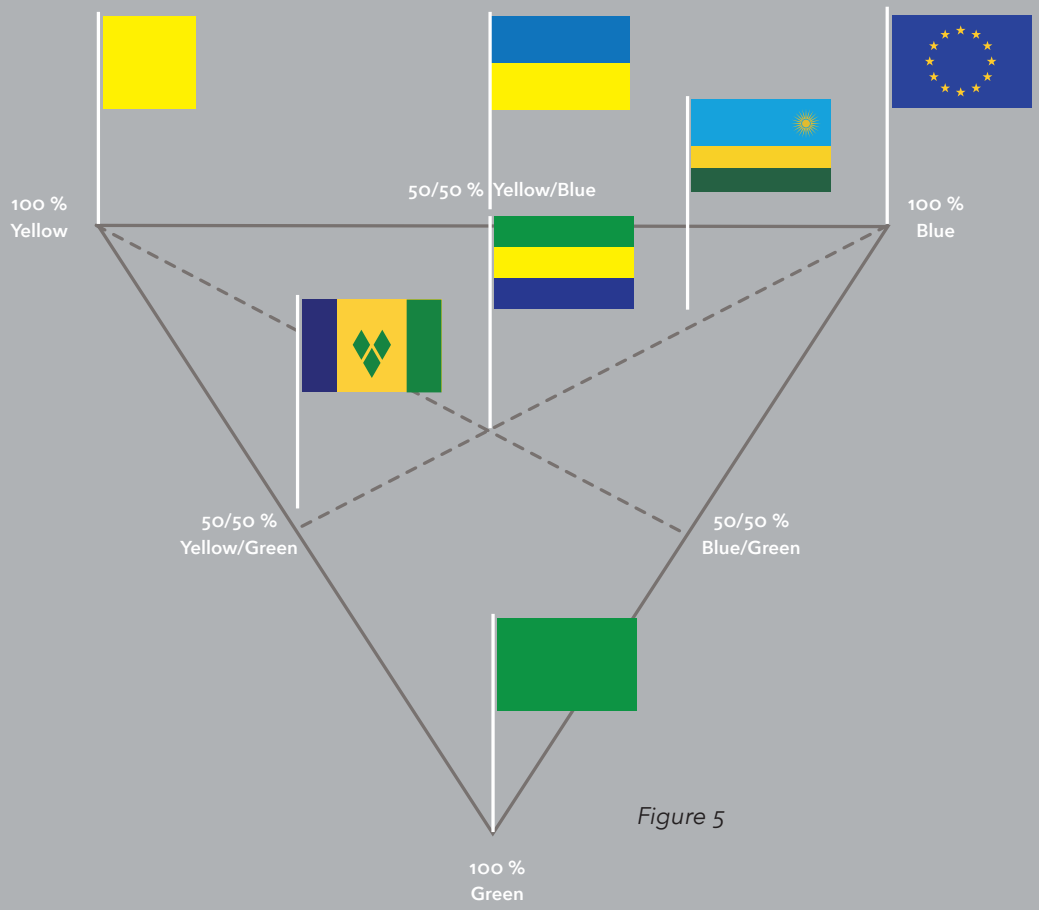


Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

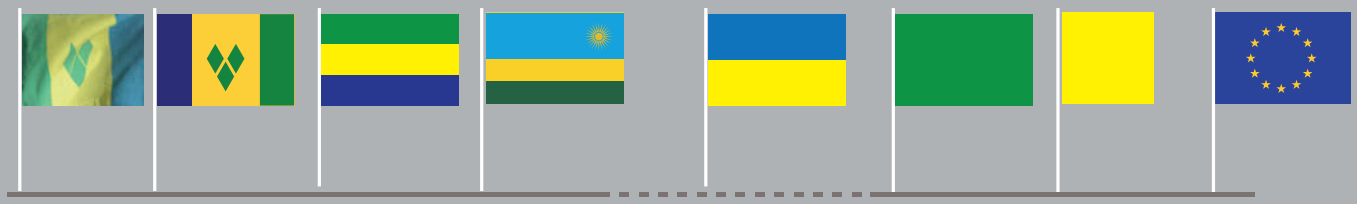


Figure 8

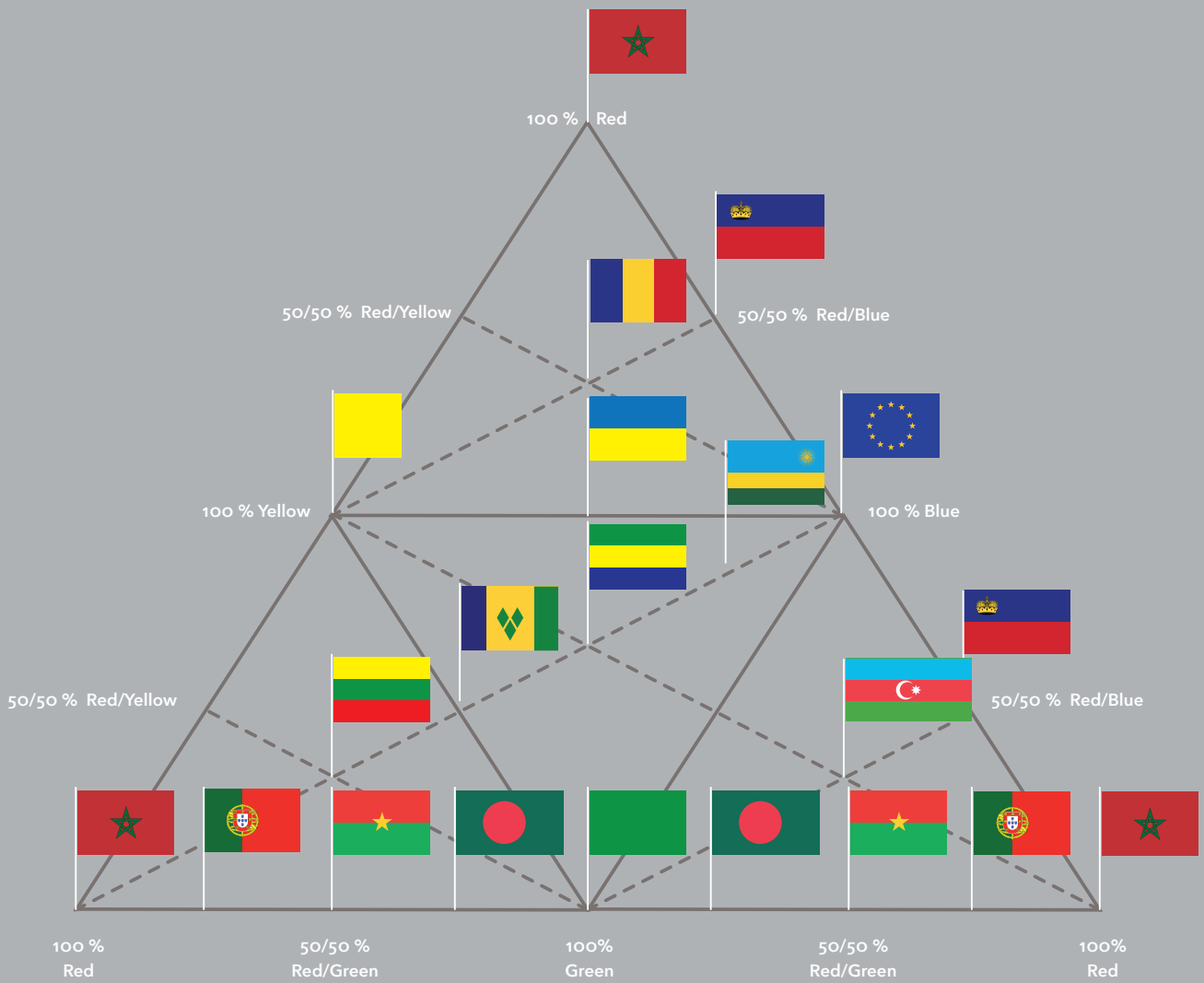


Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 6 is a digital photo, and *figure 7* the extracted flag image.

The colour proportions are 42% yellow, 31% green, 23% blue, and 4% other. These values are then used to calculate the distances from all the other flags, which can be arranged in order of distance from the sought image, as shown in *figure 8* (not to scale).

The closest in this example is St Kitts and Nevis. Again the procedure applies for any three arbitrary colours.

Four-colour Flags

Replacing one of the three previous colours with a fourth colour, for example red in figure 9, can be visualised by adding three triangles to the edges of the previous triangle. New two-colour flags, with the new colour replacing one of the existing colours, lie along the outside edges connecting the new colour with an existing colour. Three-colour flags with lie somewhere on the new triangles. Azerbaijan, Lithuania, and Romania, with equal proportions of their three colours, are planted in the middle of the appropriate triangles.

But now there are three 100% red corners, and three pairs of identical lines, red-to-yellow, red-to-blue, and red-to-green. Each pair can be 'zipped' together, bringing the three red corners together at the top of a tetrahedron (triangular-based pyramid), with Morocco at the top. Mauritius, with four equal colours, would be in the centre of the tetrahedron (not shown). Any other flags with these four colours will be somewhere inside the tetrahedron. The distance between any two flags is still calculated by Pythagoras, and the procedure applies to any four arbitrary colours.

Five Colours and more

While 4 colours make a tetrahedron, more colours are difficult to visualise. But the principle of calculating the distance by Pythagoras remains.

Five-coloured Example *(figures 10 and 11)*

Seeing that the flag is symmetric, only half of the flag was selected, so that the colour ratios were correct, 51% red, 19% black, 16% blue, 8% white, and 7% yellow. Calculating the distance from all other flags gives only one close flag, Antigua and Barbuda. Again the procedure applies for any five arbitrary colours, and indeed for any number of arbitrary colours.

Conclusion:

Colour percentages can be used to recognise flags.□

Flagraffiti

Prof James Floyd

Travellers, from the dawn of time, seem to have always had the urge to leave behind a 'calling card' at each place they visit. One has only to think of the many paintings, often displaying beautiful artistry, which our Stone Age ancestors created on the walls of their caves.

All photographs by the author

The mark of the Canadian frigate HMCS Montreal (pennant number FFH336) on the harbour wall at Funchal visited during a NATO exercise in 2022.

The German Naval Ensign used for the frigate Schleswig-Holstein (pennant number F216) which visited Funchal in August 2011.

Sailors also seem to have this urge and during my career as a shipboard lecturer I have seen some excellent examples of paintings executed on the concrete and stone walls of various ports. Faial on Horta in the Azores, Funchal in Madeira and Mindelo in Cape Verde, especially have numerous examples of paintings left behind by ships crews, commonly in the form of company logos, ships badges, or incorporating national, naval or maritime flags. I have coined the word 'Flagraffiti' as a collective term for these interesting works of art.

The common feature of these three ports appears to be large areas of flat concrete walls (just asking to be decorated!) and perhaps lenient maritime authorities who appear to tolerate (or even encourage) this decorative activity. Once a few ships have created their 'logos', it is probably difficult to stop others from doing the same! In any case, the harsh and stormy winter weather with flying salt spray tends to destroy the images over time, so they are not going to be there for ever.

Many of the paintings are amazing works of art in their own right and, like many graffiti painters, their creators certainly deserve recognition as accomplished artists. These are not simply trivial 'doodles' and demonstrate serious thought, planning, preparation and execution.

The harbour wall of Funchal in Madeira has well over 100 large graffiti and flagraffiti paintings.

The mark of the USS Robert G Bradley (pennant number F49) which visited Funchal in July 2011.

A visit by the French Latouche-Tréville (pennant number D646) to Mindelo, Cape Verde, in May 2013 prompted this painting incorporating the flags of France and Cape Verde. This was an anti-submarine frigate of the Georges Leygues-class and was commissioned in 1986, and withdrawn from service in 2022.

The visiting card of the Portuguese corvette NRP João Coutinho (pennant number F475) which visited Faial, Horta, Azores in January 2014. This 1970s class of six vessels were built for service in Portugal's African and Indian colonies.

The Portuguese frigate Comandante João Belo (pennant number F480) visited Mindelo in Cape Verde in 2005. This painting unusually incorporates a coat of arms in its design. This ship was commissioned in 1967, sold to Uruguay in 2008 and decommissioned in 2022.

Naval vessels

As might be expected, naval vessels visiting foreign ports tend to use either their national flags or naval ensigns in the paintings. Examples at Funchal and Faial include vessels from Canada, Finland, France, Germany, the UK and the USA, as well as visiting vessels from the home country of Portugal.

These paintings commonly incorporate a silhouette of the vessel, probably produced using a mask or stencil, superimposed on their national flag or naval ensign, along with the vessel's name and date of visit. The authorship of the work is also commonly included, and sometimes even the name of the Captain, so the artists are clearly happy to be identified.

Painting by the crew of P&O Cruises Britannia which visited Funchal in 2015, clearly incorporating elements of the Union Flag.

The Cunard line was founded in 1840 and celebrated 175 years in 2015. This was a visit by the cruise ship Queen Victoria to Funchal, sporting the distinctive red and black funnels of Cunard.

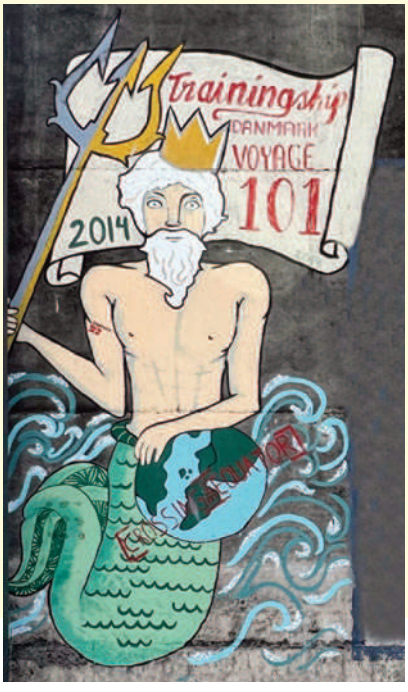
Not strictly flagraffiti, but still an amazing work of art by the crew of the Mein Schiff 4 in Funchal, Madeira. It seems to represent the god Thor with his ever-present hammer, though the connection with Madeira and the ship is unclear.

Another stunning work of graffiti art by the crew of the TUI cruise ship Mein Schiff 4 in Funchal, Madeira, dating from a visit in February 2016.

Cruise ships

The huge growth in the cruise ship industry (at least until Covid struck!) has meant large numbers of sizeable ships visiting places like the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde. Not unexpectedly, the crews of these vessels also find it an interesting pastime to decorate the local harbour walls with flagraffiti, though the 'flag' element is often only a minor or even entirely missing part of the design. When flags are incorporated, they may be the companies 'house' flag rather than a national flag. Despite this, these paintings are among the most inspirational flagraffiti, with some stunning visual effects.

The crew of Mein Schiff 3 produced this stunning graffiti when she visited Funchal in 2022. Attributed to the company's Media Department, this is clearly a corporate image designed by professional artists.



The Danmark is a fully-rigged sail training ship launched in 1932. She is operated by the Søfartsstyrelsen (the Danish Maritime Authority) and is based in Frederikshavn, Denmark. Note the tiny Dannebrog flag tattoo on King Neptune's right arm which qualifies it as flagraffiti! Voyage 101 visited Funchal in 2014.

Sailing ships

Another class of vessels perhaps surprisingly represented with flagraffiti are sailing ships. Many, but not all, are the so-called *Tall ships* which visit these isolated oceanic archipelagos as part of sail training voyages. Their crews seem equally keen to leave their mark behind in the ports they visit. ☐

The Georg Stage, built 1934, is an iron-hulled three-masted sail training ship run by the Danish Georg Stages Minde foundation to train sailors. She visited Funchal, Madeira, in 2016.

The NRP Sagres has been a sail training ship of the Portuguese Navy since 1961. She visited Funchal in 2008 and again in 2011.

STS Sedov, formerly Magdalene Vinnen II and Kommodore Johnsen, is a 4-masted steel sailing ship and was for long the largest traditional sailing ship in operation. Here she sports the flag of Russia during a visit to Funchal in July 2014.

NVe Cisne Branco ('White Swan') is a fully-rigged tall ship of the Brazilian Navy built in Amsterdam, launched in 1999 and commissioned into the Brazilian Navy in 2000. She visited Funchal in 2009.

Christian Radich is a Norwegian steel-hulled tall ship built in Norway in 1937. She was built for training Norwegian sailors but is now available for charter for other trainees. Christian Radich has won the Tall Ships Race several times, and visited Funchal in 2018 and 2019.

It's not just tall sailing ships that make it to these remote islands. This rendition of the Scottish Saltire flag in Faial, Horta, Azores, visited 2002 and 2003, appears to be from a modest yacht from Leith, the port of Edinburgh.

Sikkim's flag came into use in, or even before 1956

Jos Poels FF

The design of the flag of the Kingdom of Sikkim, which ultimately became India's 22nd state in May 1975, is well known. Its history and symbolic meaning however remain somewhat of a mystery. The recent opening of the digital Sikkim Palace Archives in Gangtok makes it possible to shed new light on the flag. The symbolism can now fully be explained, when the flag came into use in or before 1956, possibly as early as 1938.

1. Sikkim National Flag as depicted in 1965 in the glossy coronation issue Sikkim Coronation.

After Goa, Sikkim is the youngest and the second smallest state in India. It lies at the foot of the Himalayas, wedged between Bhutan to the east, Nepal to the west, and Chinese-occupied Tibet to the north. Traditionally, Buddhism, more specifically Mahayana Buddhism, is the main religion in Sikkim.

The Kingdom of Sikkim was founded in the 17th century by the Namgyal Dynasty. It was ruled by Buddhist priest-kings, known as the *Chogyal*. In March 1861, the Kingdom and the British Empire signed the *Treaty of Tumlong*, effectively making Sikkim a *de facto* British protectorate, but with full autonomy for its internal affairs. When India in 1947 became independent from the United Kingdom, in December 1950 India took over responsibility as protector of Sikkim.

In April 1973, India took full control of Sikkim and overthrew the monarchy. The Sikkim Parliament announced that the King was deposed and declared Sikkim part of India. It is widely accepted that the referendum which took place was skewed in favour of a vote in favour of annexation. On 16 May 1975, the Indian parliament agreed that Sikkim would become an Indian state.

Cacophony

Looking in flag literature[1] and on the internet for the origin and meaning of the flag of Sikkim, there is a cacophony of contradictory statements. No primary sources are given anywhere.

Until the early 1960s, Sikkim, let alone the flag

of this protectorate and Kingdom, was not included in flag books. This changed when in 1962 the American vexillologist Whitney Smith, published the flag as part of a *Flag Bulletin* article called 'Flags of Himalayan States'. He wrote: *'SIKKIM used to fly a very ancient and intricate flag with religious symbols. Recently this flag was simplified to the design shown here. The border is red and the background white. In the centre is a wheel of gold, outlined in red.'*[2] This text is accompanied by a small line drawing of the flag. Nothing is mentioned about the historical background and meaning of the colours and emblem. Smith based his text on a real Sikkim flag he had obtained in June 1961 from SKKIM [sic.] Trade Agent based in Calcutta.[3]

Smith's Flag Bulletin publication became the mother of all publications about the Sikkim flag. Captain E.M.C. Barraclough couldn't add much to the knowledge of the flag, and in revising Flags of the World in 1969, he included the flag of Sikkim. His text was clearly inspired by Smith's description from seven years earlier: 'The State of Sikkim has adopted a simplified version of a very ornate old flag. It comprises a white field with a red border. An ornamental emblem in yellow and red is superimposed in the centre of the field.'[4]

The German vexillologist Karl Fachinger also tried to get the facts right. In a letter dated 19 September 1962 from the Indian Political Officer, he did not get the requested information about the national flag. Instead he was sent a colour photograph of the personal standard of the Chogyal[5] *(Illustrations 2 - 3)*. In film footage from the British Film Institute dated 1934, a flag is visible hanging from the mast which seems to have the same complex design as on the flag in Fachinger's photo[6] *(Illustration 4)*.

More information on the Sikkim flag appeared in the early 1980s. The French vexillologist André Flicher collected the flags and coats of arms of all Indian princely states. In 1982, Flicher bundled the results into his privately published two-volume *'Drapeaux et Armoiries des États Princiers de l'Empire Brittannique des Indes'.* It included a copy of a letter and annex 'Description of Sikkim National Flag' dated 17 November 1980, that the author had received from the last and 12th Chogyal (King) of Sikkim Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal, who was deposed in 1975.[7]

However, the annex with its very detailed

2. Standard of the Chogyal of Sikkim, as provided by the Indian Political Officer to Sikkim to German vexillologist Karl Fachinger, in September 1962. (Collection Michel Lupant)

3. Drawing of standard of the Chogyal derived from the photograph received by German vexillologist Karl Fachinger.

4. The British Film Institute captured a Sikkim flag in 1934 in a film called Devil Dancers of Sikkim. (Photo: BFI)

description of the Sikkim flag was confusing. The text did not comply with the illustration of the flag shown, which, we know now was the personal standard of the Chogyal. Flicher's collection of pre-independence Indian flags was little known and didn't get the attention it deserved.

Contradictory information

With the introduction of the internet in the early 1990s lots of incorrect information, confused interpretations, contradictory information based on what others have stated with no reference to primary sources, was published regarding the Sikkim national flag. The references stated that the flag was introduced in or just before 1962, it contains the khorlo, a Buddhist wheel of life. It is a symbolic representation of the cycle of existence that Buddhists believe in.

In 2004, the British Library in London started its *Endangered Archives Programme* (EAP). The programme seeks to preserve cultural heritage and make it available to as wide an audience as possible. In 2017, as part of the EAP, the archives of the Royal Palace in Gangtok were digitised and at the same time made public on the programme's website.[8]

The digital opening of Gangtok's Royal Palaces Archives has made it possible to research the flag history of Sikkim in a proper way. The archives hold several flag related files. The most important and revealing one is found in file EAP880/1/5/35, named 'Correspondence of Tashi Namgyal (Chogyal r.1914-1963) with Crown Prince Kunzang Paljor Namgyal and Palden Thondup Namgyal (Chogyal r.1965-1982) while they were away at school'.

Item 14 of the file, of 17 images, is called 'Description about the National Flag of Sikkim, 1938'. The year 1938 is important, it must have been given by the archivists, as the year doesn't appear in the images themselves. Certainly, it is filed away and wedged in between royal correspondence dated 1938.[9]

The Sikkim flag dossier contains a draft text, a master text, and multiple copies of the master text. All are in typescript and in the English language, the extra texts serving as handouts. The text is the same as published in the annex which

5. The Dalai Lama visits Sikkim in 1956. The Sikkim flag is in the background. (Collection of late Martha Steedman/Patrick Hamilton)

André Flicher received in 1980 from the deposed Chogyal. The full master text says:

Description of Sikkim National Flag

The Flag has been simplified in recent years from a more complicated flag representing the Buddhist Wheel with 24 spokes and a border with flames. The dimensions of the flag are length one and half times breadth, red border 1/8 of breadth, central eight-spoke Khorlo (Wheel) golden yellow, half the breadth, on white background.

The central, eight-spoke-Khorlo is the Buddhist Wheel representing the eight-fold path. It denotes that Sikkim is a Buddhist country accepting the eight-fold path to emancipation. A golden Khorlo also denotes Leadership or Kingship, and hence this denotes that Sikkim is a Monarchy. The white background represents both purity and lay element of Sikkim.

The red border represents the Tantrik Mahayna flame guarding purity and the country (the white ground) and the Buddhist Dharma and Monarchy (the golden Khorlo). Sikkim is enclosed by mountains and there is really only one valley opening out of it and this wall of mountains is represented by the Red border encircling the flag. The red also stands for the Monks and the Priesthood.

A note may have to be added here to further

clarify the significance of the various colours. In Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, Tibet and some other Buddhist countries yellow and red are associated with the Monk and Priesthood. The red is specially amenited with Mahayana Buddhism of these parts. Laiti is most commonly represented by white and green. Most probably white, because it commonly denotes purity throughout the world, and green because this colour is associated with vegetation and farmers, the people that sustain the body as opposed to the spirit. In ancient times and indeed in most of these parts even today there has been very little industry that could be associated with the ordinary laity.

The Dynasty of the present Monarchy in Sikkim goes back directly without a break for more than 500 years.'

Unfortunately, the archival file in the Gangtok Palace is not accompanied by an illustration of the flag. However, without any doubt, this 1938 document relates to the flag which was previously thought to have been introduced around 1962. It fully clarifies the symbolic meaning of the colours and features on the flag, including its specifications. It successfully gives a description of the flag.

Khorlo

The Khorlo, the Buddhist Wheel, has eight spokes. The number eight signifies the Eightfold Path which consists of eight practices: right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right samadhi ('meditative absorption or union'; alternatively, equanimous meditative awareness).[10]

There is no mention or explanation of the ornate marble shaped nubs on the khorlo at the head of each spoke. There are also alternating three balls and one.

So far, no contemporary photographic or written evidence is found of the use of (national) flags in Sikkim. The earliest known photo to be showing a Sikkim flag dates from 1956. It is carried alongside the Tibetan Dalai Lama on horseback, when he visited the kingdom *(Illustration 5)*. In rare, silent, but colour footage of the Dalai Lama's visit Sikkim flags, also as shields, visible[11] *(Illustration 6)*.

6. Still from colour film about the Dalai Lama's visit to Sikkim in 1956.

The year 1956 is important in the external relations of Sikkim, with both a visit to Sikkim from the Dalai Lama, and a visit of the Chogyal to the Indian capital New Delhi. P.R. Rao mentioned this visit in his study *India and Sikkim* (1814-1970): 'A separate Sikkim flag was flown and 'a National Anthem' for Sikkim was improved.'[12]

After the death of Tashi Namgyal in December 1963, his son Palden Thondup Namgyal was crowned as the 12th Chogyal of Sikkim, and for his second marriage he married American Hope Cooke on 4 April 1965. Soon after, the glossy book *'Sikkim Coronation'* was published. It showed 'The National Flag of Sikkim'[13] It is the earliest example of what can be considered the official flag of the Kingdom *(Illustration 1)*. Nevertheless, it raises questions about the Khorlo, which is orange rather than the gold (yellow) from the *Description of Sikkim National Flag*. The centre of the Khorlo shows, in golden yellow, a triple Yin Yyang. It is the Wheel of Joy, also named *Gankyil,* and is frequently seen as a symbol on Zen Buddhist temples in East Asia. The presence of this Gankyil has been neglected in all previous writings on the Sikkim flag.

Forbidden

After the incorporation of Sikkim into India on 16 May 1975, flying of the Sikkim flag was forbidden.

As in all its other states, India does not allow the flying of flags other than the Indian national flag. The deposed Chogyal, who remained in the Palace in Gangtok, tried to keep the Sikkim national flag alive. He kept on flying the flag on his car and he also kept using his special red number plate with, in white, the wording 'Sikkim'. The Indian authorities were not happy with the subtle protests of the annexation by the Chogyal. This is revealed by the Gangtok Palace Archives. It holds three copies of letters from the Chogyal to the Indian authorities complaining about the removal and seizure of flags from his cars[14] *(Illustration 7)*. On 1 October 1974, he wrote: 'Several times the Police have made a grab at my car flag and later some senior Police officers were deputed to the Palace Gate to ensure that no car passed through flying my Flag. Instructions were also issued to the Police to remove, if necessary,

7. One of the Chogyal's car flags was displayed at an exhibition in 2007 in Gangtok, Sikkim (Collection Michel Lupant)

by force any car flying my Flag anywhere in Sikkim. Hence the flying of my Flag on my car had to be discontinued despite the Governor having told me in June, 1975 that I could fly the Flag, pending my final settlement with the Government of India.' In his complaint letter of 20 October 1975 the Chogyal says about the flag: 'I may add here that the old Sikkim Flag is in many respects a religious Flag as it contains the Buddha Chakra'.

Inside

The Palace Archives don't reveal how the dispute over the Sikkim (car) flag ended. However, until Spring 1999, the national flag of Sikkim flew over the Palace in Gangtok.[15] The use of the national flag had definitely come to an end. The Archives have however given an insight in the meaning of the Sikkim national flag. What it hasn't revealed is who designed the flag, when exactly was it introduced and on whose authority did it happen. □

Notes

1. Mario Fabretto: 'La simbologia buddista nelle bandiere del Sikkim', *Vexilla Italica*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January-June 2006, 1-6; Jan Oskar Engene: 'Sikkim – et land som forsvant fra flaggkartet', *Nordisk Flaggkontant,* No. 50, Spring 2010, 30-38.
2. Whitney Smith: 'Flags of Himalayan States', *The Flag Bulletin,* vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1962-1963), p. 18.
3. Note from Whitney Smith to German vexillologist Karl Fachinger, in collection Michel Lupant.
4. E.M.C. Barraclough: *Flags of the World,* revised edition 1969, 230, plate 35.
6. Available in collection Michel Lupant, Belgium.
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jabO3rLZFg&t=239s (Retrieved, 3 May 2024) Devil Dancers of Sikkim (1934). 3:45. British Film Institute digitised films Part of India on Film: 1899-1947
7. André Flicher: *Drapeaux et Armoiries des États Princiers de l'Empire Britannique des Indes.* Two volumes. Dreux : [1982]. Vol. 2, p. 06-162 – 06-165.
8. https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP880 Fragments of Sikkim: Preserving and presenting the palace archives of a Himalayan Kingdom, 1875-1975 (EAP880) (Retrieved, 19 February 2024)
9. I still want to be careful, as the flag description is not dated. The different documents in the file spanning the period 1914-1963, are not stored in chronological order everywhere.
10. Tilmann Vetter: The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism. Leiden: Brill, 1988, 11-14.
11. youtube.com/watch?v=xDnHRIKWdqk (Retrieved, 15 April 2024) Part 2: 1956 HH the Dalai Lama & Panchen Rinpoche visits Kingdom of Sikkim: Conserve Tibet Project.
12. P.R. Rao: India and Sikkim (1814-1970). New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1972, p. 283. Thanks to Jan Oskar Engene.
13. *Sikkim Coronation.* Gangtok: Coronation Souvenir Book Committee, [1965], [4].
14. EAP880/1/7/10 (1 October 19750; EAP880/1/7/26 (20 October 1975); and EAP880/1/5/169 (28 November 1975).
15. Jackie Hiltz: 'Constructing Sikkimese National Identity in the 1960s and 1970s', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2003, 67. During the author's visit to Sikkim in October 2005 he did not see a single 'old' Sikkim flag with the khorlo. The only flags used were horizontal blue-yellow-red tribands of the *Sikkim Democratic Front* (SDF), the then ruling party of the state.

FI GAZETTE

Events, Conferences, and Meetings

Saturday 18 May 2024 was the FI 2024 Spring Conference held at Conway Hall, London. A record number of delegates for an FI conference saw familiar members, and non-members all enjoyed a day of presentations and engaging buoyant conversation. The programme opened with John Cartledge previewing his ICV30 presentation, *Flags and the Law in England* that explored the principal regulations and protocols governing the design and use of flags in England. FI Chief Vexillologist Graham Bartram, who designed the flag for Antarctica in 1996 to symbolise its role as a hub for scientific collaboration, in revisiting the flag, presented *A Flag for a Polluted World: Antarctica flag redesign proposal.* Brian Cham, NAVA Flag Design Consultant, presented *Unravelling the Tino Rangatiratanga Flag Through the Eyes of its Designer,* after speaking to Linda Munn, one of the original designers of this Māori flag, designed in 1989. Patrick Rennie, President of the Mars Society UK introduced us to the many attempts at a flag for the planet Mars and presented *Interplanetary Flag Design: A New Flag for Mars,* which was followed by an interactive audience discussion in proposing a new flag for the Red Planet. Geoff Parsons of The Heraldry Society then took us on a vexillological travelogue after a recent trip to an area of the globe rich in history and flag culture with *Flags of the Southern Regions of South America and of the Antarctic Territories.* The presentations were all recorded and will be made available to members. Look out for the CEO's monthly email.

Thursday 8 February 2024 was the most recent FI Council meeting, held online. The main talking points were plans for the FI 2024 Spring Conference, conferences in late 2024 and into 2025, and following the success of the FI 2023 Winter Conference in partnership with the Heraldry Society of Scotland, potential conference partnerships and collaborations with other organisations in hosting events and conferences. We are also currently in phase three of the FI library digitisation project, which provided conversation and an update.
The next Council meeting will be held online, on **26 June 2024.**

Saturday 16 November 2024 is the FI 2024 AGM and Winter Conference. This will be an entirely online day event presented via Zoom with an international audience and full programme of speakers.

Saturday 17 May 2025 is the FI Spring 2025 Conference taking place in York at The Bar Convent Living Heritage Centre. It is the first time the FI has been in York since the summer of 2001 when the city hosted ICV19. Please see the FI website for full ICV19 proceedings.

ICV30, Beijing

The 30th International Congress of Vexillology is to be held in Beijing, 12 to 19 August. The Vexillological Research Centre of China (VRCC) have released the preliminary details. To learn more about registration, accommodation, travel, the programme, as well as the 28th Session of the FIAV General Assembly, visit the VRCC website at http://en.vrcc.org.cn/.

Get involved with the FI

Could you take on a role as an officer or adviser? Turn your hand to writing articles for *Flagmaster*? Or speak at an FI Conference? If so, please do let us know and tell us more about your credentials, interests, and enthusiasms. We'd love to hear from you. Please contact the FI CEO at the address on page 2 of this magazine. ☐

The Ensigns of the House of Savoy Navy (1713-1861)

Enrico Ricchiardi

WIKIPEDIA

Until 1871, Italy as we know it today, was a patchwork of smaller and larger independent states. It ended a process which started some 75 years earlier in the Napoleonic era. The Kingdom of Sardinia was the first initiator of the unification. Its flag, and particularly its naval ensign, played an important role in the complex history of the Italian tricolore.

1. Savoy Galley with the great Savoy Modern ensign at the stern. 1747, author unknown.
Archivio di Stato di Torino (AST), H VIII 53

2. Variant of the Savoy ensign with the inscription FERT in the four cantons. SAVOY' FLAG being red, with a white cross, which divides the flag in four quarters, being in each quarter a white letter; F, E, R, T, of which letters the words are, Fortitudo Ejus Rhodum Tenuit; what is: his fortitude has saved Rhodes. C. Allard : Nieuwe Hollandse Scheepsbouw, 1695, plate 47.

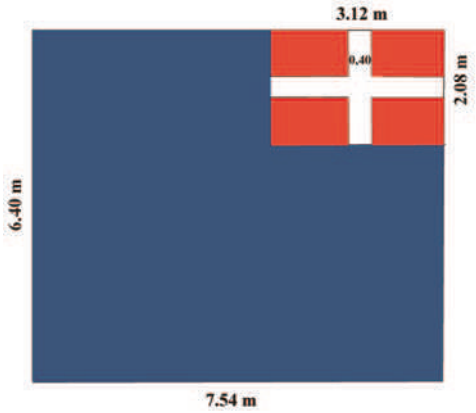
From 1713 to 1720 the Kingdom of Sicily was ruled by the House of Savoy. In 1720 it was forced to exchange the island for Sardinia. The Savoy ensign was a red flag with a white cross, called the 'Savoy Modern' from the coat of arms of the House *(Illustration 1)*, it clearly identified Savoy civil and naval vessels. The Savoy Modern flag was flown on towers, and fortifications, on the harbours and beaches of the Savoy-controlled Ligurian coastal towns of Finale Ligure, Loano, Oneglia as well as Sicily and Sardinia.

Documentation on the Savoy ensign up to the 1760s is poor with no regulations on the use of a naval ensign, after the 1720 Sardinian ensign, appeared on contemporary flag plates. The first is a variant of the Savoy ensign with the inscription FERT in the four cantons, the meaning of which remains controversial despite the many hypotheses put forward by scholars over the centuries, not supported by documents.[1] The flag with the inscription FERT, was in use from 1695 *(Illustration 2)* and is described as Savoy flag *('Savoyen Vlag')*. It was probably designed to identify the insignia of Savoy ships from those of Malta, which had almost an identical flag.[2]

The second, rarely seen flag has the Madonna and Child in the centre and is said to have first flown on the galley *Capitana Veneta,* which brought Amadeus VI of Savoy (1334-1383) from Venice to Constantinople. In 1366, this ensign was azure blue and had gold stars, with the Madonna and Child in the centre.[3]

3. Tableau de pavillons ou bannieres que la pluspart des nations arborent a la mer. Circa 1756. Pavillon de Savoye.

4. Savoy square-rigged 1775-1776.



5 Drawing by the author of the stern ensign of the fourth-rate vessel San Carlo in 1764. The measurements of modern Savoy in the canton are determined at best.

From 1756, this insignia *(Illustration 3)*, was occasionally hoisted as a distinguishing flag when a member of the House of Savoy or the Commander of the Fleet was aboard. Azure blue is one of the main dynastic colours of the House of Savoy. It was inspired by the sky and the mantle of the Virgin Mary and was widely used over the centuries on maritime insignia, on military flags and ties, for cockades and the scarves of army officers. Azure remains a prominent colour in Italy today, following the collapse of the Savoy monarchy in 1947. It still can be seen on officers' scarves and the flag ties of the modern Italian Army, as well as in the name *Azzurri* (Blues) which is used by Italian athletes in all sports.

Frigates' ensigns

Carlo Emanuele III (1730-1773) adopted an ensign reminiscent of the British Blue Ensign *(Illustration 4)* for his fleet of two frigates bought from the Dutch Republic in 1762. They were the 50-gun *San Carlo* vessel[4] and the 36-gun *San Vittorio* frigate. The ensign consisted of a blue rectangular cloth with a canton of the coat of arms of the House of Savoy. This ensign was also used by smaller ships, effectively abolishing the previous centuries-old ensign with or without the FERT letters.

The new Sardinian ensign is described in detail in an administrative document entitled: *'1764, Budget project for the maintenance of the San Carlo vessel and the San Vittorio frigate in collaboration with the Royal Establishment'.*[5] From this document it can be deduced that the stern ensign and bow jack were identical[6] for both the square-rigged vessels. These are defined in the document as 'Her Majesty's Flags' *(Illustration 5).* They were rectangular, but not yet of the two-third proportions (two high, three wide) which would appear in the Savoy Navy only at the beginning of the 19th century. The ensign measured approximately 7.54m (29 Sardinian *palmi*) wide and 6.40m high, made with eight pieces of cloth, each one felso (0.80m) wide. The bow flags were smaller and of identical design: 4.94 m wide (19 *palmi*) and 4.0 m high (made with five strips of one *felso* each).[7]

On the *San Carlo*, the *Capitana*, several 'His Majesty's insignia' were planned: two swallow-tailed pennants, the first 6.24 meter (24 *palmi*) long and 4 meters (8 *felsi*) high at the pole in maximum width, the second 9.36 meter (36 *palmi*) long and 3.60 meter (4.5 *palmi*) maximum width. On the *San Carlo* there were two swallow-tailed at the fly pennants, the first 6.24 meter long (24 *palmi*) and 4 meter high (at the pole, 5 *felsi*). The second was more elongated: 9.36 meter long (36 *palmi*) and 3.60 meter (4½ *felsi*). Finally, on both ships three *girolle,* small blue pennants with the red crossed arm at the pole, were made to decorate the tops of masts when there were no flags hoisted. These ensigns were almost certainly used in accordance with the customs and practices of the British fleet.

The Savoy Navy lacked experience in operating square-rigged ships and hired several experienced British sailors. The *San Carlo* was entrusted to the command of Christopher Atkins, an English naval officer who was on half pay and willing to take command of the *Hermione*. In 1762

he arrived in Villafranca (the port of Nice) and entered the Sardinian service for three to four years. It was agreed that once in the Sardinian Navy he would be promoted to the rank of Post-Captain (*Capitano di Vascello*) and received an annual salary of £100. Atkins requested that he also be promoted to the rank of Post-Captain in the Royal Navy and to retain that rank on his return to England. The 1764 ensign continued in use until 1809.

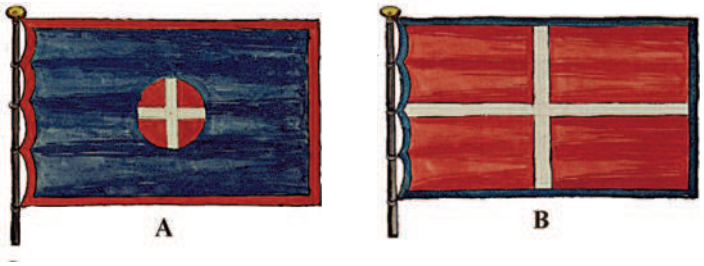
A 1765 source does not show the flags described above but shows two other flags of which no further information is given. The source is a book of flags drawn by an unknown artist depicting the ensigns hoisted by the ships that passed through the port of Leghorn (Livorno in Tuscany) in 1765. Two of them were defined as 'Savoy ensigns' *(Illustration 6)*, either fictitious or drawn by the artist after seeing them on a Savoy merchant ship whose captain had hastily commissioned a sailmaker who was not familiar with them.[8]

The Savoy ensign, model 1764, survived the death of King Carlo Emanuele III and remained in use during the reigns of Vittorio Amedeo III and Carlo Emanuele IV (1796-1802), as shown by the drawing of it dated 1796 *(Illustration 7)*.

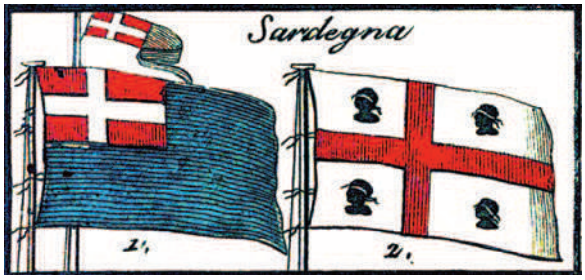
The 1809 ensign

In December 1798, Charles Emmanuel IV (1796-1802) was forced by the French revolutionaries to leave Turin. The entire royal family, including Vittorio Emanuele, Duke of Aosta went with him. In 1802, he became King Vittorio Emanuele I of Sardinia after his brother renounced the throne. The new King, who reigned until 1821, moved around the Italian peninsula with his entourage until 1806. In that year he decided to take refuge in Sardinia, as Napoleon Bonaparte's French Army had occupied almost the entire Italian peninsula. The French had not invaded Sicily, where Ferdinand II of Bourbon took refuge, the monarch of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1810-1859), Sardinia also avoided a French invasion. It was the last possession of the House of Savoy. The two islands maintained their independence until the fall of Napoleon in 1814, thanks to the support of the United Kingdom, whose powerful navy prevented the French from dominating the Mediterranean.

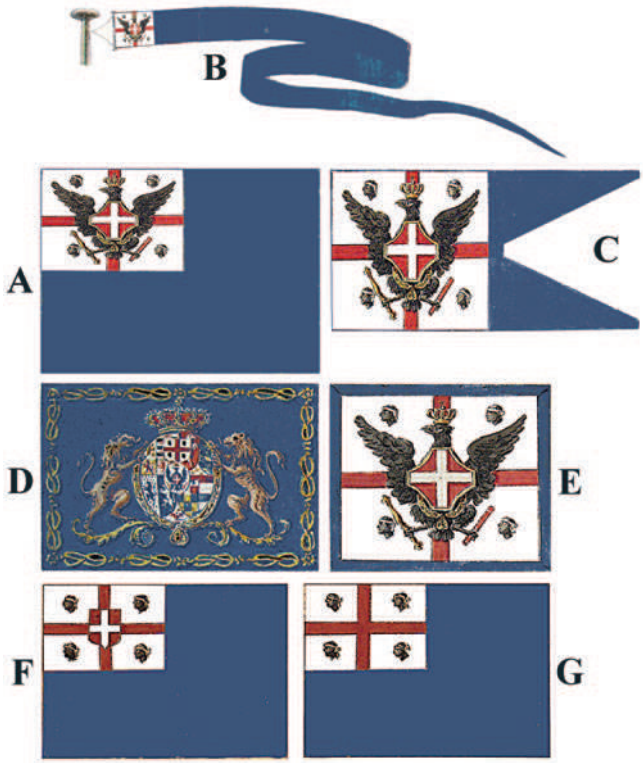
After the disbandment of his regiment, Giuseppe



6. The two flags are indicated as 'Savoy ensigns' in the Maritime Blazon of the Mediterranean. A: n° 35, Savoyard and Sardinian Pavilion. B: n° 36, ditto, unknown designer, 1765
(BNCF, Capponi Gino.309).



7. Right, Sardinian ensign and banner model 1764, left flag of Sardinia Island. Vincenzo Scotti 1796. Table of the most accurate and common flags used on board warships and merchant ships of all nations.



8. The detail of the Sardinian naval flags. Probably designed by Verani in 1809. The flags shown are A, the warship flag. B, warship pennant. C, galley cornet. D, Royal standard. E, flag of command. F, privateers' flag. G, house flag.

Verani, a young Second Lieutenant of the Provincial Infantry Regiment of Vercelli, joined the Savoy Family in Sardinia. Verani gained favour with the Royal Family thanks to his landscape drawing skills. He was invited to accompany Queen Maria Theresa of Habsburg-Este (1802-1821), the wife of Victor Emmanuel I. Bored with life at the small court of Cagliari, the Queen travelled around Sardinia together with Verani, who drew landscapes that impressed the Queen as souvenirs.

In addition to landscape painting, Verani painted military figures and designed flags. The King commissioned him to design new uniforms for the Sardinian army, to design and procure some flags and banners. We know of the military artist's work for the court because his wife Monica Borrone kept a diary. In May 1809 Monica Borrone wrote (translated from Italian):

'... my husband had more and more commissions from His Majesty the King and the Queen. For the King he made several plans [landscapes] of the surroundings of Cagliari and for the Queen the view of the Royal Palace seen from the Palace of the City. He also made the flags of the Sardinian Regiment, the Savoy Riflemen battalion and the Royal Navy. Then several banners of the Provincial Cavalry, he made a flag for the Royal Galley and gave all the designs for the other flags that were hoisted on Sardinian ships. My husband drew the flags of the Sardegna Regiment, the Cacciatori Battalion of Savoy, the Sardinian Navy, and several banners of the provincial cavalry.'[9]

The diary enables us to date the new ensign *(Illustration 8)* as model 1809. The new flag replaced the coat of arms of modern Savoy in the canton with a more complex one, inspired by that of the island of Sardinia (silver with a red cross, accompanied by four natural dark brown heads blindfolded on the forehead). The cross was carried by an ancient Savoy eagle in full flight, bearing on its breast, within an unusually shaped shield, the arms of modern Savoy. The eagle's claws grasped the royal sceptre and the marshal's staff. The 1809 model was short-lived and was abolished in December 1814, when the Savoy's recovered the old territories, increased by Liguria, whose coat of arms would find a place on the Sardinian ensign.

1815 and 1816 ensigns

On 30 September 1814, the Congress of Vienna decided to incorporate the Liguria into the Kingdom of Sardinia. Thus, Savoy inherited legacy of the Genoese Republic, whose ensign had long sailed the Mediterranean. The Cross of St George was then incorporated into the Sardinian ensign, creating a new model that combined the arms of Savoy, Sardinia and Genoa in the canton. It was approved in March 1815 (as shown in *Illustration 9)* but had a short life and was replaced in 1816.

The abandonment of the 1815 ensign led back to a wider international scenario. In April 1816 the agreement between the Beys of Tunis and Algiers and Admiral Edward Pellew, First Viscount of Exmouth (1757-1833), commander of the British fleet in the Mediterranean, put an end to pirate raids on the island of Sardinia and other coastal states. In this context, the four Moorish heads of the Sardinian coat of arms were perceived by the Maghreb side as a kind of unnecessary provocation. To avoid any possible source of friction and by the diplomatic line supported by the British Ambassador in Turin, King Vittorio Emanuele I decided to remove them by creating a new ensign that replaced the previous one on 1 June 1816.[9]

However, the agreement did not have lasting results, because the Barbary pirates did not stop their raids and the King of Sardinia, Carlo Felice (1821-1830), was forced to send naval vessels to fight them. One of the reasons for this was the fact that the four Moors disappeared from the warships and continued to appear on the merchant ships of the island of Sardinia, which displayed the

9. Model drawing of the Sardinian ensign adopted on 15 March 1815 and identical for warships and merchant ships. This model drawing was approved on 28 March 1815. (AST, Commissariato di Guerra in Cagliari, mazzo 1).

10. Official model drawing of the Sardinian ensign in 1816 sent to the Netherlands and published in Recueil van Zeeorders *3 November 1817, No. 30.*
(Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam inv. nr. 2004.1508).

11. On the left, is a drawing of the national flag of the Kingdom of Sardinia model 1816, showing the proportions of the different elements (Galuppini G. 1987, Illustration 13). On the right, from top to bottom, are the author's reproductions of the coats of arms of Savoy, Sardinia. The three crosses are included in the canton of the 1816 flag but the four Moors of Sardinia were not introduced for obvious reasons.

island's coat of arms complete with the cross and the Saracens on the foremast.

The 1816 ensign can be seen as a kind of Savoy Union Jack in its own right, with so many similarities with the British one *(Illustrations 10)* and the blue ensign. The Savoy, Sardinian and Genoese crosses were superimposed in the canton, in a way that is not immediately evident *(Illustration 11).* A royal crown above the three crosses distinguished warships from merchant ships, beginning a tradition that is still followed today in the ensigns used in the Italian navy.[10] To complete the series of flags used on Savoy ships, in the mid-1820s a table was published showing the twelve different types of flags used on Savoy ships, depending on the crew and the flag from which they are based *(Illustration 12).*

Show the flag!

King Carlo Felice was very fond of staying in Genoa. For this reason, he was aware of the need to increase the size of the fleet to enable it to cope with two demands that required his full attention.

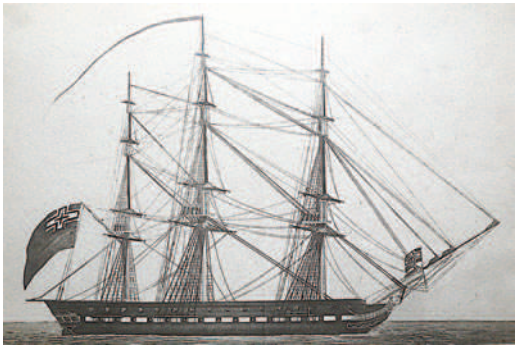
The first was the Beys of Tunis and Algiers who continued to assault the Sardinian trade ships and carried out raids on Sardinia. The second was that in those years the British representative had urged him to provide for the defence of the growing merchant traffic thanks to the commercial enterprise of the Genoese. With very little maritime traffic to the Middle East, Genoese captains and ship owners had begun to cross the Atlantic Ocean to buy and sell goods with the coastal states of Central America including Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina. In these countries, the Sardinian ensign was unknown because stable diplomatic relations had not yet been established with them, and the Genoese requested protection. Carlo Felice responded by opening diplomatic offices on which the Consuls raised the 1816 ensign. This was continued by the new King Charles Albert (1831-1849) who, with a fleet enhanced by his predecessor, ordered the Savoy Royal Navy to send a frigate to South America on a two-year rotation, to show the flag and protect ships of the merchant fleet. With this new practice, the Sardinian ensign started to become known outside the Mediterranean *(Illustration 13).*

The Italian tricolour

On 23 March 1848, Carlo Alberto responded to urgent appeals for help from rebellious Milan.

Tableau des Pavillons et des Distinctions adoptés dans la Marine
de S. M. le Roi de Sardaigne.
Etendard Royal
Pavillons de Commandement

12. Table of flags and distinctions adopted in the Navy of His Majesty the King of Sardinia. From the top and left to right: Royal ensign. Banner and ensign of the warships, flag of the Duchy of Savoy. Savoy National Jack and Admiral en Chef ensign. Flag of the Duchy of Genoa. Flag of the Kingdom and Island of Sardinia. Flag of the county of Nice. Flag of the Savoy religious and military order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus. Savoy ensign for merchant ships. Flags of command: Admiral on the mainmast, Vice-Admiral on the foremast, Rear-Admiral on the mizzenmast. Commodore or Head of Division on the mainmast. Flag for requesting a coastal pilot on board, introduced for use by warships and merchant vessels. Already recognised by the various naval powers. The banner above the model 1816 Savoy ensign is probably incorrect, as it shows the Genoese arms instead of the modern Savoy arms. Courtesy of the Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare della Repubblica Italiana.



13. The 'Commercio di Genova', a 60-gun sailing frigate of the Sardinian navy, hoists the large 1816 model national flag at the stern.
(Turin, Museo Nazionale d'Artiglieria).

Demonstrations in Turin had encouraged him to intervene against Austria. This was the beginning of the First War of Italian Independence (1848-1849). A royal proclamation *'People of Lombardy and Venice'* declared that the Kingdom of Sardinia and its army were ready to fight the Austrian Imperial Army on the fields of Lombardy. The Italian tricolour of green, white, and red was raised and decorated with the Savoy cross, a symbol of the Italian Risorgimento. The adoption of the tricolour by the regiments of the Sardinian army, which were on their way to Lombardy to fight against the mighty Austrian Imperial Army, initially did not have any effect on the Naval flags.

A decree on the ensign, issued by Prime Minister Cesare Balbo on 27 March 1848, stipulated that ships should carry an Italian tricolour to be hoisted on the main mast when

Sardinian ships came across Austrian naval vessels. The blue Sardinian 1816 ensign remained at the stern. Ships crewed mainly by Venetians and Friulians sailors when seeing the Risorgimento tricolour, would fraternise with the Savoy ships, or at least refrain from attacking them. Such a temporary flag position could not last long.

Tricolour as Sardinian ensign

On 15 April 1848, a few weeks after Balbo's document, Carlo Alberto, then commander of the Piedmontese Army in Lombardy, promoted the Italian tricolour to the level of a national flag. The new

flag was to be hoisted at the stern by the Royal Sardinian Navy. The royal decree created many problems of interpretation that still reverberate in vexillological studies today because it was not accompanied by a model that clearly defined the shape of the new insignia.

The implementation of the decree was not immediate because, at a time when the telegraph was not yet a reality, message transmission times were measured in days and weeks.[11] In these circumstances and whilst the King and the Minister of War were not in Turin, the Secretary of War acted with great speed. The explanatory circular,[12] which was sent to the consuls and the Sardinian navy commander as early as 18 April 1848 arrived in Genoa between the 20 and 21 April,[13] where the fleet was to leave for Venice to face the Austrian fleet. The timeframe for carrying out the operation, identifying a manufacturer, ordering, and packing the flags was very short.

On 26 April, the first contingent of the Sardinian naval squadron set sail to the Adriatic. The British ambassador in Turin, on the advice of his consul in Genoa, relayed the news to London:

'Turin, 29 April 1848. I have the honour to inform your Lordship that a division of the Sardinian squadron composed of the frigates San Michele 60: Des Geneys and Beroldo 50, the brig Daino 16, and the schooner Staffetta 12, sailed the day before yesterday from the port of Genoa. They will shortly be followed by the corvette Aquila and the steamer Malfatano, and the point of rendezvous is supposed to be Malta, for the Tripoli, returning from Constantinople, has received orders to wait for their arrival there. The steamers Ichnusa and Authion will leave Genoa with the second division. By decree of the 15th instant, the Sardinian flag has been replaced by the three-coloured one, green, white and red, with the escutcheon of Savoy in the middle, surmounted with a crown for ships of war.'[14]

Enemy

The citation of the decree, as a separate note at the end of the report, does not mean that the British Consul saw the tricolour flying at the stern with his own eyes, otherwise, he would have written it explicitly. The fleet left Genoa still flying the 1816 blue ensign, the only flag recognised by the enemy and the many French, British, Spanish, and Neapolitan warships present in the Mediterranean during those weeks.[15] This is confirmed by the official report of Rear Admiral Giovan Battista Albini, commander of the naval squadron, who announced on 29 April 1848 that the *Regia Squadra,* composed of the ships *San Michele* (60-gun, square-rigged frigate), *Des Geneys* (44-gun, square-rigged frigate), *Beroldo* (idem), *Daino* (16-gun brig) and *Staffetta* (10-gun brig) had left Genoa and would be followed on 4 May by the *Tripoli* (6-gun steamer).[16]

The note, which details the state of readiness of the ships, makes no mention of the replacement of the 1816 national flag with the tricolour at the stern. However, the tricolour which was to be hoisted on the mainmast when Austrian ships were sighted was on board, as can be seen from the report that Albini sent to Turin on 23 May 1848, as soon as he entered the Upper Adriatic.[17] The Rear Admiral, who commanded the Sardinian squadron, reported his arrival in Venice, where he had met up with the Allied squadrons. The Neapolitan Navy consisted of five steam frigates, two sailing frigates and a brigantine. The Venetian Navy was more modest, consisting of two brigantines and a corvette, all sailing ships. The list of ships in the Neapolitan squadron shows that it was more modern than the Sardinian squadron, which, except the *Tripoli*, was all sailing ships.

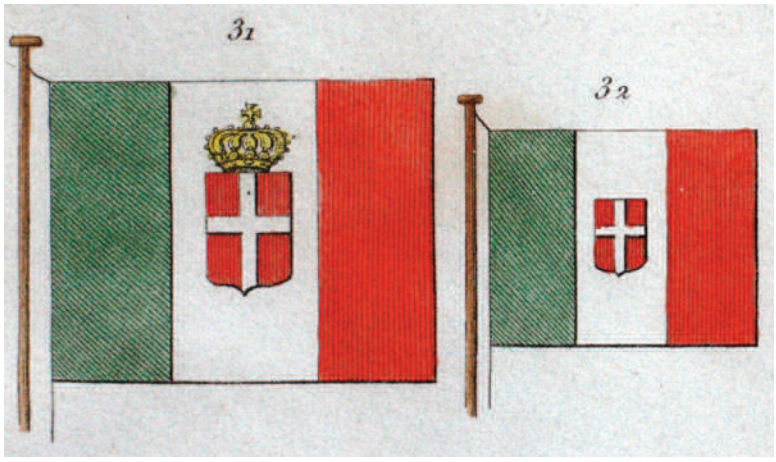
The Rear Admiral reported that a British frigate, a brig and a French warship were in Venice as observers. He also reported that the Austrian fleet had sailed between the mouths of the Tagliamento and Piave Rivers. This was one of the few occasions when the enemy fleet showed itself, but there was no fighting. More interesting was the fact that the Allied fleets had entered the waters of Trieste, where the Austrians had taken refuge. The Sardinian ships with the Italian tricolour hoisted at the top of each mast, but not at the stern, showed that the new tricolour insignia had not yet reached them.

A few days later the Neapolitan squadron, due to the uncertainty of King Ferdinand II of Bourbon (1830-1859), whether to participate in the war on the side of the Piedmontese, received orders to withdraw. The Allied decision did not create any problems for the Piedmontese, because the Austrian ships remained at anchor in the Port of Trieste, offering Albini no chance of engagement.

Incertitude

Official documents between April and June 1848 give no information on the appearance and proportions of the national tricolour, nor do they mention the possible presence of a blue border around the Savoy shield on the white cloth. Neither the Ministry in Turin nor the Commander of the Navy in Genoa decided on the details of the new flag by producing a design. The former was justified by the need to make the Army operational, which had been sent to fight in Lombardy without adequate preparation since the war had broken out unexpectedly. The second had to give priority to equipping the fleet, which had to set sail as soon as possible to rescue Venice, besieged by the Austrians.

There are two contemporary iconographic sources which, although lacking the chrism of officialdom, are useful for vexillological research. The first is a plate of European maritime insignia that accompanies the *'Dizionario Generale di Scienze, Lettere, Arti, Storia, Geografia'* published in 1849 by Giuseppe Pomba of Turin *(Illustration 14)*.[18] The two tricolours, which do not follow the proportions of two-thirds (three modules wide by two modules high), show a modestly sized Savoy shield without a blue border in the centre of the white cloth and stamped with the royal crown, in the examples intended for warships. The second is the large plate entitled *'Pavillons des principaux Etats du Globe',* published by Turgis in Paris around 1849, in which the Sardinian flags, without a blue border, match the model published by Pomba.



14. Naval flags of the Sardinian States were designed and engraved by G. Bonatti for the 'Dizionario Generale di Scienze, Lettere, Arti, Storia, Geografia etc. etc.' published in 1849 by the publisher Giuseppe Pomba of Turin. (private collection)

This led to the assumption that in the first weeks following its adoption, the tricolour bore the Savoy shield in the centre without a blue border. From April 1848, the blue border made its appearance on the Navy ensigns. This is confirmed, not by archival sources in Turin which were absent on the subject during the period 1848-1850, but by diplomatic correpondence found in London and The Hague in the Netherlands. These letters turn out to be the best sources for reconstruction of the evolution of the tricolour between Spring and Autumn of 1848.

British source

On 19 May 1848, Count Adriano Thaon di Revel,[19] the Sardinian plenipotentiary (representative) in London, informed Prime Minister Palmerston[20] that the ships of the Kingdom of Sardinia would henceforth fly the Italian tricolour on the mainmast, with the modern arms of Savoy in the centre of the white field, surrounded by a blue border and surmounted by the Royal Crown for warships. At the same time, the 1816 national flag was hoisted on the stern.[21]

This is the first official communication that testifies to the introduction of the blue border around the Savoy shield. Revel's note confirms that more than a month after the decree on 15 April, which had raised it to the status of national flag, the tricolour was no longer hoisted on the stern of Sardinian ships, where the azure national flag of 1816 still stood, but on the mainmast. This was a subordinate position because its presence was only envisaged in the event of crossings with Austrian ships, to arouse Italian sentiments in imperial crews, almost all of which were Venetian and Friulian.

In short, throughout the Spring and Summer of 1848, the Sardinian Navy continued to fly two national flags. It assigned the hierarchically superior stern flag to the one that was no longer in use. All of this was a clear anomaly in protocol of the

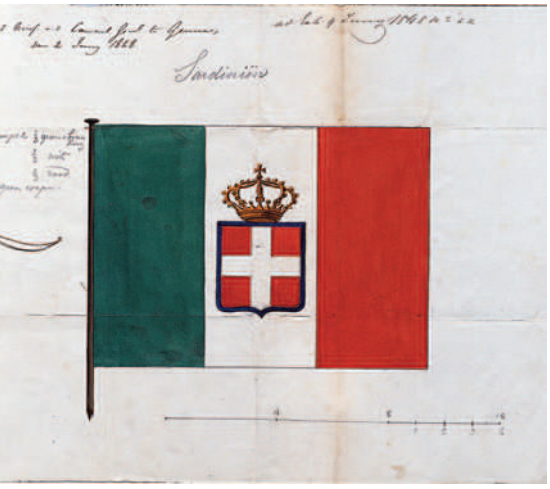
sea. This did not allow for any uncertainty in identifying the nationality of ships.

Dutch source

Like the note sent to London on 19 May 1848, the Sardinian ambassador in The Hague informed the Dutch government of the adoption of the new flag for the Kingdom of Sardinia, hoisted on the main mast and of the preservation of the old flag on the stern.[22]

However, the dispatch lacked a model drawing, which made it difficult to understand the shape of the tricolour, from its orientation (horizontal or vertical) to the sequence of colours of the drapes to the shape of the royal arms in the centre of the banner. The note suggested that the red mentioned first, was at the flagpole.

The vagueness of the shape of the Savoy tricolour and the coexistence of two national flags on the ships, described as strange in the internal correspondence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Navy in The Hague, led the Dutch government to ask its consul in Genoa, H. Alewijn, to obtain an official design for the new ensign of the Sardinian fleet. On 30 May Alewijn sent an official request for clarification to Rear-Admiral Francesco Serra, interim commander of the Sardinian Navy after Prince Eugene of Savoy had taken over the general lieutenancy of the Kingdom.[23]



15. Model of the Savoy national tricolour sent by Rear Admiral Serra to the Dutch Consul Alewijn on 2 June 1848.
(National Archives, The Hague, Ministerie van Marine: Aanhangsel van het Marine Archief, 2.12.02, inv. 2250A, 15 June 1848 No. 62.)

16. The Sardinian page from the manuscript 'Verzameling van Vlaggen', for what was going to be (but never finalised) an official Dutch Navy flag book. The upper caption under flags 17 and 18 translated from Dutch reads: 'Sardinian War Flag | 1848 | Sardinian War Pennant | 1848 | Established by Sardinian Royal Decree of 15 April 1848. See letter of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Registered at the Navy Department 15 June 1848, No. 62.' The lower caption under flags 19 and 20 states: 'Sardinian Merchant Flag | 1848 | Sardinian Merchant Pennant | 1848.' The source given is the same as for flags 17 and 18.
(Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NG-2020-3-11-1-5-15).

Serra promptly replied on 2 June *(See Box 2 June 1848 on the next page)*. The Dutch consul had a copy of the royal decree of 15 April 1848 on the adoption of the Italian tricolour and a clear colour model drawing of the Savoy shield with a blue border *(Illustration 15),* which did not specify that the tricolour was to replace the flag at the stern of ships. Alewjin immediately sent the model drawing to The Hague, where it arrived on 9 June, together with a note in which he still expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the double display.

The promptness with which Serra had the design made suggests that the presence of the blue border around the Savoy shield was already established, although no trace of a formal adoption measure has been found in the Turin naval archives. International pressure certainly helped to speed up the process of standardising the fleet's ensign. On 15 June 1848, the Dutch Navy authorities ordered the inclusion of the Savoy tricolour in the *Verzameling van Zee-orders voor de Zeemagt,* considering the Sardinian blue ensign suppressed *(See Box 15 June 1848).*

The new Savoy flags were also

copied in the *'Verzameling van Vlaggen'* a manuscript for what was going to be (but never finalised) an official flag book of the Dutch Navy *(Illustration 16)*.

Rear Admiral Serra was aware of the contradiction with the rules on the hoisting of national flags in which the Sardinian fleet found itself in those weeks. A contradiction that was pointed out not only by the government in The Hague but certainly by all the diplomatic representatives of the maritime powers who had been informed of a change in the national flag that did not reflect reality. He was also aware that it would take time to replace the old national flags with large tricolour flags with heavily embroidered crowns, so he provided Sardinian diplomats and through them foreign governments, with correct information that reflected the real situation of Piedmonts ships. Carlo Alberto's will was to be represented, albeit in an unorthodox way, by the tricolour hoisted on the mainmast.

Rear Admiral Serra could do no more, once the waters had calmed down, he managed to normalise the situation in the months that followed, and at the end of the summer of 1848, the old 1816 Sardinian ensign was finally lowered.

The 1851 model

From 1848 the use of the tricolour by merchant ships was plagued by widespread uncertainty, especially in the Genoese area, where many Captains would fly the tricolour without the Savoy shield *(Illustration 17)*. Although there were heavy penalties for such offences, the authorities were initially more than tolerant. In March 1851, Count di Cavour (Minister of the Merchant Navy)[24] decided to issue a circular[25] threatening legal action against the improper display of the tricolour ensign on merchant ships.

However, the circular assumed

2 June 1848:

Dutch to English translation:

'Genoa, June 2, 1848. / His Excellency / The Lord Baron van Bentinck / Minister of Foreign Affairs ad Interim / in The Hague

Most Noble Severe Lord! Being now able to discharge myself in full to Your Excellency, in respect of the information provided by Z. Ex. requested by the Minister of Naval and Colonies ad Interim, because of the new tricolour flag, which has replaced the former Sardinian flag for both war and merchant ships, I have the honour to send to Your Excellency:

1° Translation of His Majesty's Decree, dated 15 April 1848 relative to that. As it follows from this that the former blue flag has been completely set aside, I cannot agree with the idea that it would henceforth continue to be flown at the stern and which therefore cannot be omitted if to be regarded as based on a misunderstanding.

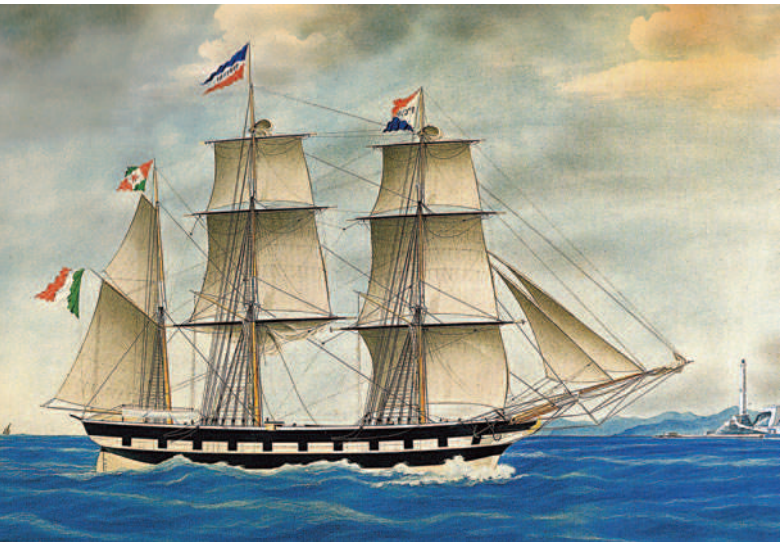
2° Drawing of the tricolour flag of warships, the pennant of which also consists of three colours running in the same order and vertical direction. Merchant ships also fly the same flag, but with the distinction that the crown placed over the coat of arms of Savoijen fades away.'

(National Archives, The Hague, Ministerie van Marine: Aanhangsel van het Marine Archief, 2.12.02, inv. 2250A (15 juni 1848 No. 62.).

15 June 1848:

Dutch to English translation:

'The Hague, the 15th of June 1848 / Litta. D/No. 62. / The Minister of the Navy. Having regard to a letter from the temporary Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated 12 December no 2b, and enclosures, from which it appears: / that H. M. the King of Sardinia, by Decree of April 15, 1817, for the War and Merchant Navy of that Kingdom has introduced a new flag, to replace the one whose image, by resolution of November 3, 1817, no. 30, has been included in the Recueil van Zeeorders; / that this new flag consists of the so-called Italian colours: green, white and red, in three parallel & vertical bands, the green along the stick, and in the middle of the white band the coat of arms of Savoy, which, at the Flag of War, covered by a Crown; more widely, that the new War Pennant also consists of the three colours mentioned, in the same order, running in a vertical direction; that the foregoing shall be printed, and this Resolution included in the Recueil der Zeeorders; and as a result of which the aforementioned resolution of 3 November 1817 no 30 & appendix, included therein, is cancelled.'



17. Captain Angelo Pitto's Ship Fortuna. On the mizzenmast is hoisted a tricolour rigging flag with a sort of wind rose charged on the white, reminiscent of the Napoleonic Italian Republic of 1802. The tricolour Savoy insignia on the stern is without the modern Savoy coat of arms. (Private collection).

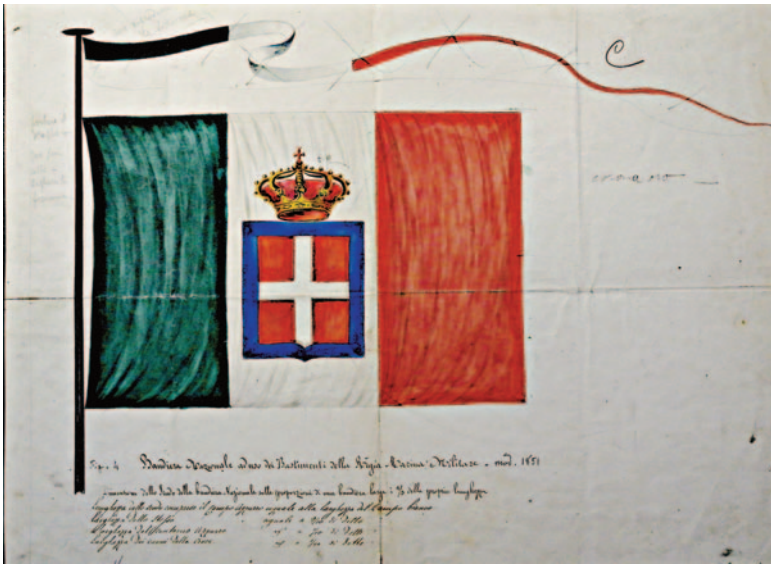
BANDIERA NAZIONALE
per i Bastimenti della Marineria Mercantile
LA BANDIERA DEVE ESSERE LARGA I DUE TERZI DELLA PROPRIA LUNGHEZZA
DIMENSIONI DELLO SCUDO DI SAVOJA IMPRONTATO NEL CENTRO.
Lunghezza dello Scudo uguale alla Larghezza
Larghezza uguale a nove decimi
Larghezza del contorno azzurro uguale ad un decimo
Larghezza dei rami della Croce uguale ad un decimo

18. Model drawing in chromolithography showing the national flag for the Merchant Navy of the Kingdom of Sardinia. (AST, Archivio di Marina, Materiali, mazzo 350)

the existence and maximum diffusion of an official design of the flag, which had not yet taken place. Cavour was aware of this and issued a model, reproduced in chromolithography, in which the exact proportions and dimensions of the Savoy shield and royal crown were defined *(Illustration 18)*.[26]

The specification of the exact shape of the Savoy shield, which had never been defined before, made Cavour's banner the 1851 Sardinian ensign. However, according to the Turin archives, the diffusion of the design seems to have been the result of individual requests from the periphery rather than an organic plan of capillary distribution set up by the Ministry.[27] This would explain the persistence, until 1860, of general non-compliance by Genoese ships with the flag rules.

The exact dimensions of the tricolour decreed by Cavour for merchant ships led the Minister of War, Alfonso Ferrero della Marmora,[28] to standardise the flags of military warships based on Cavour's model, distinguishing them according to tradition with the royal crown above the shield of modern Savoy. The State Archives in Turin hold a drawing that exactly reproduces Cavour's design, with the addition of the royal crown *(Illustration 19)*.[29]



19. The design of the tricolour model 1851 for the Navy. Underneath the drawing it reads 'Ill. 4 National Flag for the use of the ships of the Regia Marina Militare model 1851. Dimensions of the Shield of the National Flag on the proportions of a flag wide high two-thirds of its length. The length of the shield including the Blue Field equal to the width of the white cloth. The width of the same is equal to 9/10 of said. The width of the azure outline is equal to 1/10 of said. The width of the branches of the cross is equal to 1/10 of said'. (AST, Archivio di Marina, mazzo n° 506).

National Flag official

Despite the birth of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, the question of the new Italian ensign remained unresolved. Although ships, fortresses, public buildings, and diplomatic missions flew the flag of 1851, which was also carried at the head of Italian army regiments, the tricolour adopted by King Carlo Alberto's decree of 15 April 1848, issued without precise measures, was still formally in force. This encouraged indiscipline. La Marmora, the Minister of War, and Cavour were unable to persuade King Vittorio Emanuele II (1849-1878) to issue a royal decree repealing Charles Albert's decree of 15 April 1848. Nor did his son, Umberto I (1878-1900), intend to break this ideal bond with his grandfather.

It took 70 years for the 1848 tricolour to be removed from the law when Victor Emmanuel III (1900-1947) finally issued a Royal Decree on 24 September 1923,[30] which was approved by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Italy on 24 December 1925 and became law.[31] Finally, the Italian ensign of the Kingdom of Italy model 1851 became official. □

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Flagmaster's editor Jos Poels for providing the necessary documents and model drawings of the 1848 tricolour flags currently preserved in The Hague and London, without which this reconstruction would not have been possible. I am also grateful to Dr Jeroen ter Brugge, Curator of the Maritime Collections of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, for reproducing some of the documents kept in The Hague.

Notes

1. Ziggioto A. (1967) and Galuppini G. (1987).
2. Mola di Nomaglio G. (2001).
3. Cibrario L. (1840-844, Vol. 1, p. 242).
4. But always defined as a frigate in Turin's documents.
5. '1764, Progetto di bilancio per la manutenzione del Vascello San Carlo e della Fregata San Vittorio in conformità del Regio Stabilimento.' Archivio di Stato di Torino (AST), Sezione Corte, Materie Militari, Ufficio Generale del Soldo, mazzo 3 d'addizione, doc. 9.
6. All the flags of the two square-rigged were made of 'Troye cloth', which is not clearly identifiable but certainly made of wool.
7. The Sardinian palmo was about 26 centimetres long (Anonymous, 1845) and the felso (or ferzo), the measure of the width of the cloth used for making sails and flags was 80 centimetres wide and long as needed.
8. Mola di Nomaglio G. (2001, p. 400, footnote 15), assuming that the small Savoy square-rigged fleet was created in 1773, mentions the two flags without specifying their iconographic source in the Blasone Marittimo del Mediterraneo, assuming they came from the galleys and attributing the first (Illustration 4A) to the Capitana.
9. AST, Archivio di Marina, Materiale, registro 270.
10. A special naval crown is added to the current flag of the Italian navy.
11. The telegraph line between Torino and Genova became operational in 1851.
12. AST, Ministero della Guerra, Ministero della Marina (1814-1860), Materiale, Register n° 379.
13. But let us remember, without drawings or measurements to define the details.
14. Correspondence respecting the affairs of Italy from January to June 30, 1848, presented to both Houses by Her Majesty on July 31 1849, Harrison & Son, London.
15. It would have taken several weeks for the news to reach foreign ships sailing in Italian waters, even if Turin had immediately informed foreign governments of the design of the new tricolour ensign through normal diplomatic channels.
16. AST, Ministero della Guerra, Ministero della Marina (1814-1860), Materiale, Register n° 359. A few days later, a second naval division arrived at Albini in Ancona and then he proceeded to Venice. It consisted of the corvettes Aquila (24 guns) and Aurora (16) and the pyro corvettes Tripoli (7) and Malfatano (5). See also Manuele P. (1997, p. 162).
17. AST, Ministero della Guerra, Ministero della Marina (1814-1860), Materiale, Registro n° 359.
18. Although published in 1849, the dictionary is the result of a lengthy typographic and lithographic preparation that would backdate the production of the plates by several months.
19. Adriano Thaon di Revel and Sant'Andrea (Turin 1813-ivi, 1854) was the Sardinian ambassador in London from 31 January 1847 to 4 January 1849.
20. Henry John Temple 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), Foreign Secretary (1846-1851).
21. Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Italy from January to June 30, 1848, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, July 31, 1849, Harrison & Son, London, Part II, p. 456.
22. The original document in French is in the National Archives in The Hague. Catalogue number NL-HaNA 2.05.01-147).
23. Idem, NL-HaNA 2.05.01-1481, 30 May 1848.
24. Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour (1810-1861), the architect of Italian Independence, held the Department of Agriculture and Trade and, on an interim basis, that of the Merchant Navy from October 1850 to April 1851.
25. AST, Ministero della Guerra, Ministero della Marina (1814-1860), Materiale, Register n° 383.
26. Ibidem, Registro n° 324.
27. This is evidenced, among other things, by the note accompanying six copies of the model drawing sent to the Navy Consul in Cagliari on 30 June 1851, which began: 'In accordance with the request expressed in the sheet of Your Illustrious Lordship herewith attached dated 25 June 1851 [...]'. AST, Ministry of War, Ministry of the Navy (1814-1860), Material, Register no. 384.
28. Between 1849 and 1864, Alfonso Ferrero della Marmora held various ministries, including that of War.
29. AST, Archivio di Marina, mazzo n° 506.
30. N. 2072 "Norme per l'uso della Bandiera nazionale".
31. Legge 24 dicembre 1925, n. 2264.

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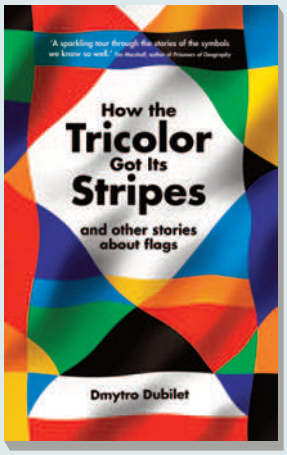
FM
BOOK REVIEW

How the Tricolor Got Its Stripes, flags are a life hack, as Dmytro Dubilet says at the start of his book, or as I have always believed, a history hack. Dmytro's addition to a vexillogist's bookshelf is a world tour of how a country's history influences its flag symbolism. How else would you write a book about flags? This book takes you on a journey of flag themes with personal anecdotes along the way.



Dubilet, Dmytro. **How the Tricolour got its Stripes and other stories about flags** (Profile Editions, 2023; ISBN: 978-1-800817-60-9)

We take this world tour with chapters focusing on the features of flags. The book considers how themes and flag features cross continents and are prevalent throughout history. The origins of each national flag are described with titbits from history that reveal hidden meanings and links between countries.

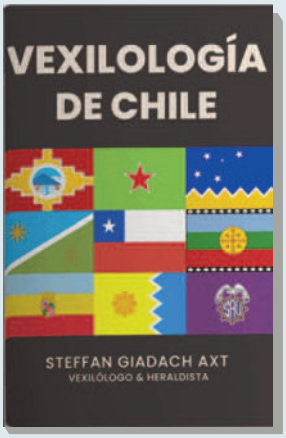
I particularly enjoyed the word *tak* meaning 'yes' in Polish and 'no' in Indonesian. I learned that when Montenegro was part of Yugoslavia, the national internet domain used by Montenegrins was '.yu' and then after independence it changed to '.me'. The book has humour, which is unusual when reading a book about flags. It includes the story of a 19th century Austrian Archduke who shot an eagle while hunting and was surprised to discover that the dead bird didn't have two heads. The book is full of images of both current and historical flags and emblems, although you may need your magnifying glass to see some of their detail.

What makes this book stand apart from other titles on the bookshelf is the author's personal journey with flags. You read about the author's enjoyment and enthusiasm, which is endearing and not overbearing. I have an affinity for the author and his story, which is unusual when reading a book about flags. I do have different opinions on what is considered flag perfectionism, and you will need to ignore the references to the United Kingdom and Great Britain being the same place.

I admire the author's passion to write his first book about flags with no previous experience. Dmytro writes a well-rounded introduction to world history intertwined with flags and their symbolism. It is a fantastic book for any budding vexologist, containing many historical flag links to learn about. *Leigh Wetherall*

Vexilología de Chile, self-published by the author, is a welcome addition to the literature of vexillogist's, it consists of two main parts. The first part includes a brief history of vexillology, and a detailed section on flag terminology and design.

The second part includes a history of the national flag of Chile, as well as those of the various indigenous peoples who preceded the Spanish. It discusses current flag trends, such as the move towards logo flags in local government. The text is complemented by an extensive, 80-page gallery of Chilean flags including regional, provincial, municipal, local, armed forces, institutional, indigenous, political, sporting (including Everton FC), university and religious flags. The book, of course, is in Spanish.



Giadach Axt, Steffan. **Vexilología de Chile** (Santiago, the author, 2024) ISBN 9781304513380. *Available only as a pdf.*

Some of the illustrations within the text appear a little squashed because of formatting constraints, and on page 46 the author has used the old Flag Institute flag. But these do not detract from the overall value of the book.

At the moment, the book is only available from the author, and payment is only possible via PayPal at <https://paypal.me/banderista>. The list price is US $5.00 (yes, only five dollars), which represents exceptionally good value. Steffan tells me he is intending to make copies available through the print-on-demand service Lulu.com, for those who prefer to hold a book in their hands. *Ian Sumner* ☐

ICV30th BEIJING 2024

2024年第三十届北京世界旗帜学大会

2024 THE 30TH BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF VEXILLOLOGY

Flagmaster
Specification
Sheet

ISO 3166-2:CN
ISO 3166-3:CHN

CHINA

People's Republic of China

Effective from
1 October 1949

Flag
National

Industrial Standards
GB 12982-2004 / 12983 2004

WIPO
Not informed

Legal Basis

The flag was adopted on 27 September 1949 at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative. 'It is adopted unanimously that the flag of the People's Republic of China is a red flag with five stars, symbolizing the great unity of Chinese revolutionary people.'

In the current Constitution of China, promulgated 4 December 1982. Article 136 reads: 'The national flag of the People's Republic of China is a red flag with five stars.'

On 1 October 1990 the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Flag* came into force, which mainly deals with when and how the national flag should be flown.

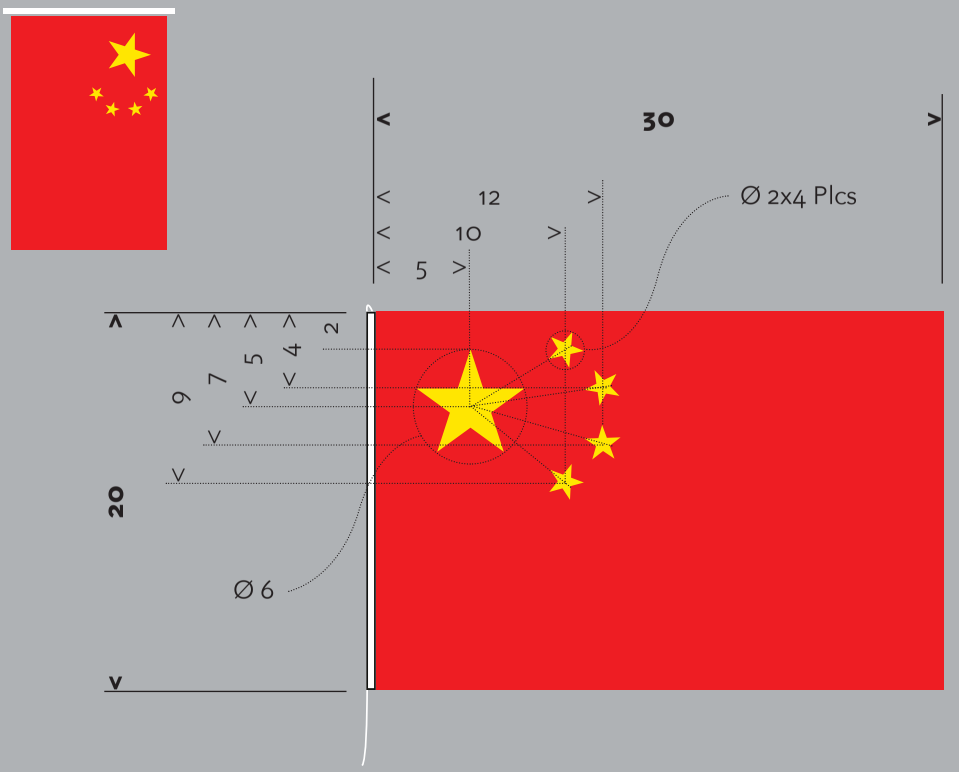
Article 2 of the law states: 'The National Flag of the People's Republic of China shall be made according to the Directions for the Making of the National Flag promulgated by the Presidium of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.'

These directions were issued 28 September 1949 and a day later published in the People's Daily.

The Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of China has issued *GB 12982-2004 National Flag*, containing specifications that a Chinese flag must comply with. It is available at the cost of US $ 259. This goes alongside with *GB 12983-2004 Standard Color of National Flag*, which is only in Chinese. (US $ 139)

Observations

The specifications of this sheet are taken from the *Directions for the Making of the National Flag* (1949). The colours are taken from *GB 12983-2004 Standard Color of National Flag*. Pantone references are not given.



Each of the top points of the four smaller stars are rotated such that they point towards the venter of the larger star.

Colour	Red	Yellow
GB	238-028-037	255-255-00
RGB	238/28/37	255/255/0
Hexadecimal	#EE1C25 2	#FFFF00
CMYK	0/88/84/7	0/0/100/00